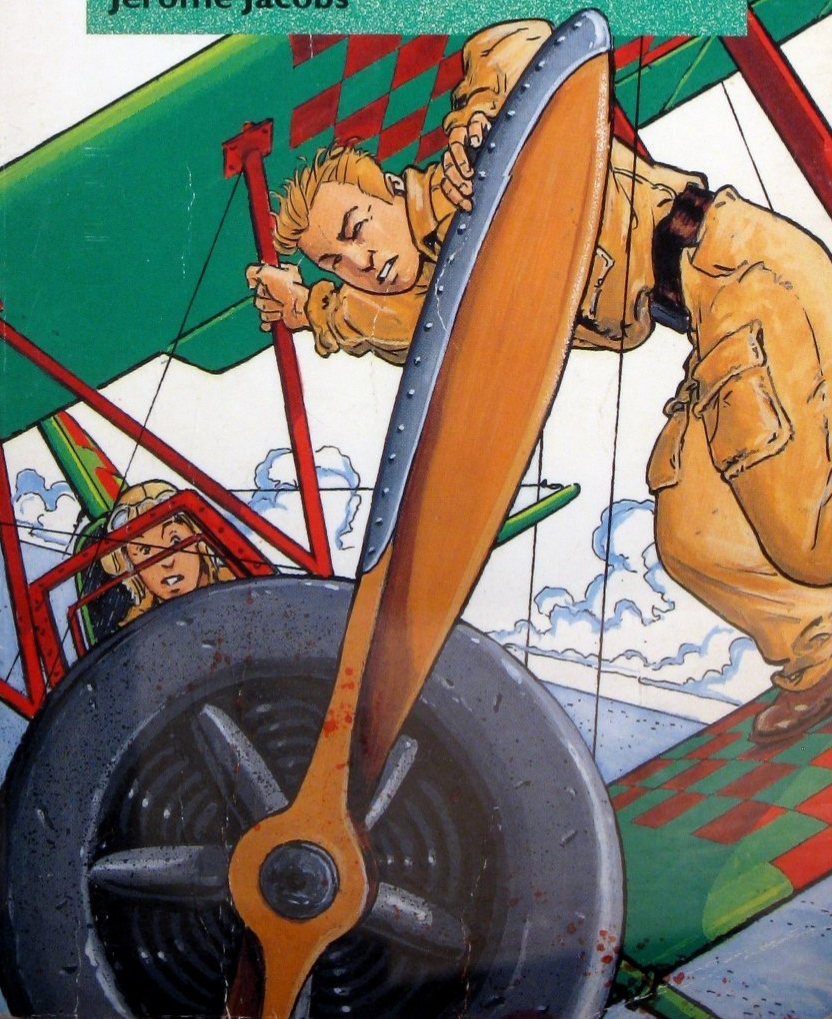


B I B L I O T H È Q U E V E R T E

YOUNG INDIANA JONES™ AND THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

Jérôme Jacobs



Young Indiana Jones™ and the Bermuda Triangle

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A boat on the water

New York, Central Park Lake, September 1913

The heat of the afternoon had given way to a relaxing freshness. Aboard their gondolas, Professor Jones and Herman gazed upon a moving sight. On the surface of the water, the young Indiana Jones and the lovely Norma Bellini were captivated. Their gondola floating at the determination of the water, toward a destiny colored by happiness...

After a chase that led them from Niagara Falls to the top of the Empire State Building, they had just put the young gangster Al Capone in the hands of the New York police¹.

On several occasions, Indy and Norma feared for their lives. That's why this romantic interlude was so welcome.

"*Whewww!*" Herman exhaled, like a punctured tire. "I'm not sad that this whole affair is over.

¹See *Young Indiana Jones and the Metropolitan Violin* in the same collection.

I can't say anything good about that crook Al Capone. I hope I never run into him again..."

"I hope you don't either," Professor Jones agreed, wrinkling his forehead. "But don't delude yourself, my boy: I think he will not stay long in prison, and a profitable career awaits him in the underworld."

This unfortunate fact by no means reassured Herman, who was naturally nervous. Now he had but one desire: to return to his native Utah, by gondola if necessary!

For his part, Indy's thoughts were elsewhere. He had started to row, but had eyes only for his passenger. Now, at this time of day, traffic was heavy on the lake in Central Park, and amateur sailors had to observe strict rules of caution. In general, everything proceeded courteously: with a friendly wave of the hand from the ladies in their frilly outfits with elegant lace, the rowers nodded their heads in gratitude.

This was how things went without the grain of sand, that day, that would stop this well-oiled machine. Too busy staring into the eyes of the beautiful Norma, Indy neglected to look to his left. Standing on his gondola like a flagpole, an emaciated young man, nose surmounted by thick glasses, eagerly gesticulated. At his side stood a young person with a round and curvy body, dressed in elegant attire, who was frowning sternly.

"Be careful, Woody," she advised in a high-pitched voice. "This kid does not seem to be very good pilot. Not like you, Woody..."

Touched in the deepest part of himself by this compliment, Woodrow Smith, "Airman inventor" of his state, turned to his beloved, the glorious

Cornelia Postlethwaite, who blinked at him like a frightened dove.

“Don’t look at me, Woody,” moaned Cornelia. “If you don’t do something, I think we are going to collide with the other gondola.”

To escape this doom, the young man tore himself from the object of his contemplation and began to gesture wildly.

“Ahoy, you on the boat? Hmm... Hey, you on the gondola?! Watch where you’re going!”

“What is Junior thinking?” Professor Jones stormed from aboard his own boat. “He’s never this careless.”

Dressed in a blue suit, a fancy yellow waistcoat and a bright red bow tie, Henry Jones seemed straight out of a Jules Verne novel. This modern-day Phileas Fogg had “knocked about” at all latitudes but always marveled at his only son’s capacity for getting into complicated situations.

“My word, but... Junior! JUNIOOORRR?!” shouted the professor, in vain. “Are you going to listen to me? JUNIOOORRR!!!”

Blind to the world around them, deaf to the calls of the aviator in distress and the professor, Indy and Norma did not stir. And so it was most natural for their boat to strike with full force against that of Woodrow and Cornelia. A disastrous crack brought the two young people back to reality.

“By God! Indy! What have we done?!” exclaimed Norma as she jumped to her feet.

Immediately, the gondola began to sway dangerously. The girl clung to Indy’s shoulders, an act which shook the boy. He lost his balance!

“But do be careful!” yelled the professor. “You

think you're on a ferry-boat?"

"Woody, do something!" Cornelia shouted, making great circles with her chubby little arms. "Can't you see they're going to fall into the..."

She was interrupted by a resounding "SPLASH!" For a few seconds, there was no more than a ripple on the surface of the water. It was the brown-haired Norma who reappeared first, followed by the blond-mopped Indy.

"Indy and Norma are on a boat," muttered Professor Jones. "Indy falls into the water... and Norma falls into the water. What else is there?" he asked, turning to Herman.

The latter, flabbergasted, gazed wide-eyed at Henry Jones. He scratched the top of his skull thoughtfully.

"Their lunch box?" he ventured, with a glimmer of hope in his eyes.

Indy's Stetson had floated to the water's surface. Its owner seemed in no hurry to get it back. Indeed, his first impulse was to rescue Norma, who had just climbed from the water and was back aboard the treacherous gondola. Her hair plastered to her face, the passionflower who had accompanied him to the Klondike² had lost some of her allure. The shock was such that the "Italian nightingale" had remained silent. A rare event!

"I... I'm baffled," stammered Indy, his vision blocked by a golden lock. "I... I don't know where my head was..."

"Me, I know..." Norma replied with a knowing

²See *Young Indiana Jones and the Phantom of the Klondike*, in the same collection.

wink. "Yooou always have your head in the claa-oods..."

"Yeah, that's probably it. In the claa-oods... umm... the clouds," admitted the young man.

He could not explain the strange effect the young Italian singer had on him. Every time he encountered her, he lost half his wits.

"Is everything okay? Nothing broken?" inquired Woodrow Smith, who was lying flat on his back in his gondola.

"I... I'm really sorry," apologized Indy. "I should have been more careful."

"Indeed, young maaan," added Cornelia. "One thing is certain: I would neeeever embark for the island of Cythera with you..."

"For the island of six era, for the island of six era," mumbled Indy. "There's just one thing for me: dry land!"

At that moment, a booming voice was heard:

"Junior, I do not congratulate you. When I think that your grandfather and your great-grandfather served in the Scottish Navy!"

This time, it was too much. Indy lost his temper:

"What can I do, if these darn gondolas can't stay afloat? And then, you only had to watch where you were going, too," he added, turning to Woodrow. "As for you, Dad, I've told you a hundred times not to call me Junior!"

"Come, stop your squabbling, both of you," Norma intervened. "Youuu should make introductions, Indy. I'm Norma Bellini," she said, extending her hand toward Cornelia.

Cautiously, Woodrow brought the two gondolas

close. Then Indy's father came to dock his boat with that of the aviator.

"I am Professor Jones," he declared confidently. "Junior is my son, and this one is his friend, Herman Mueller. They are classmates. Hmm... delighted to meet you, miss, even under such circumstances."

Indy shot him an evil look in the way only he could.

"Chaaaarmed, professor. My name is Cornelia Postlethwaite, and this is my... friend, Woodrow Smith. Woody is an aviator with the dream of being the first to cross the Straits of Florida. My Woody is an advennnnturer."

The adventurer in question bowed to Norma and shook hands with Indy and the professor.

"We better not to stay here forever," he commented. "Our hotel is located in the Little Italy neighborhood, forty blocks from here. If I counted right, there are seven subway stops. By the time we return, Norma will have caught pneumonia..."

Cornelia and Woodrow exchanged glances full of anxiety. Both had the same idea at the same time.

"Never mind," offered the young woman. "I'll take you to my parents. We live in an old buiiild-ing of the last century, just two steps from Central Paaarkk. Norma can get dry and change clothes. I'm sure my sister will agree to lend her an outfit. She is... hmm... much thinner than me..."

"What rotten luck!" Indy thought. "It's just peeeerfect! I was going to invite Norma to dinner, just the two of us... Between the crash and the swim and now this, my plans have been sabo-

taged!"

"It's very kind of you," replied the professor, without even asking Norma's opinion, much less that of Junior.

"Among decent people, what could be more naaaatural?" laughed Cornelia.

Ten minutes later, the small group crossed Central Park towards the "old bourgeois building" of the Postlethwaite family. The first hints of autumn scented the evening air.

"Dear professor. You said that your ancestors had contributed to the defeeeeense of Scotland, is that right?" Cornelia said as they crossed 5th Avenue. "I too am of British descent. I've heard that even royal blood runs through my veins. But I don't belieeeeeeve it!" she croaked, with feigned modesty.

Indy turned to Herman to whisper:

"This lady is starting to make my blood boil."

All this talk of blood caused Herman to imagine running into Al Capone at the end of some dimly lit alley! The poor boy could not stop looking around, worried that they were being followed by the black cars of the Mafia.

Professor Jones replied politely:

"Young lady, the royal family would consider it an honor to have you as their cousin, I have no doubt. Hmm... But let's talk about you, Woodrow—can I call you Woodrow?—Cornelia told us that you plan to achieve a feat in the air?"

"In fact... Henry! As you probably know, the Frenchman Louis Bleriot first crossed the Channel between France and England. A distance of 48 km! Well, I intend to do four times better, so to speak,

as the Florida Straits are about 200 km. And if I succeed, I will launch an assault on the Atlantic Ocean!"

"The Atl...? Oce...? *Whewwww*," Herman exclaimed admiringly. "Me, I just want to go back to Utah."

For his part, Indy had listened to Woodrow's words. Crossing the Florida Straits. Darn!

The young airman sent a wink to his new friend, Henry Jones.

"I do not attempt this feat only for love of adventure," he confided quietly. "I also hope to impress Cornelia. You see, I want to marry her, but she is reluctant to marry a penniless eccentric who spends his weekends tinkering with his 'cuckoo bird' in a dingy hangar, out in the middle of nowhere..."

"I understand," replied the professor in the same tone. "Such a feat would surely attract the attention of the aviation industry and you could be awarded some considerable money..."

"You read my mind, my dear professor..."

The little group had just crossed the street where the Postlethwaite family resided.

"Have you known Cornelia long?" Henry Jones asked him.

"Well, I met her during a previous trip to New York," said the aviator. "You see, I live in Miami, Florida. So, I sometimes come here to look for parts, from one of my colleagues or friends..."

"He too has his head in the cloouuds," intervened Cornelia, who had overheard their conversation. "But enough talk. We're heeeeere."

As one, Herman, Indy and Professor Jones looked

upon an imposing mansion, the rays from the setting sun covering it in a shimmering bronze. Clearly, the future husband of the eldest Postlethwaite daughter should have some credentials... and deep pockets. Certainly, the proprietors would not grant the hand of their daughter to an adventurer who had no riches beyond his his ambition.

“Poor Woody!” Indy thought. This isn’t the end of his troubles!”

True to his character, the generous nature of the boy was not slow to reassert itself. He would love to help out... especially if he saw an opportunity to escape the dull regimen his own father would impose! And indeed, he would perhaps be able to do both. But he would have to play it carefully. Very carefully.

The resistance grows

Inside the Postlethwaite's mansion house, Henry Jones was delighted to discover antiques of great value, old master paintings and even a piano where the composer Frederic Chopin performed his complete *Nocturnes* in concert.

"Can I offer you a cup of tea, Professor?" whispered the mistress of the house, amazed to receive this distinguished guest. "What an honor for me to welcome you as a patron. Our Metropolitan Museum owes much to your generosity. Isn't that right, Marmaduke?"

It was indeed largely due to Professor Jones' efforts that the Metropolitan had built its collection of medieval art.

"Isn't that right, Mar-ma-duke?" repeated Mrs. Postlethwaite, separating each syllable as if she were speaking to a simpleton.

The man who answered, the aforementioned Marmaduke, was a poised man in his sixties. His graying hair and bushy eyebrows made him look like a former colonel in the Indian Army. Mr.

Postlethwaite had only one defect, an early deafness that forced his wife to yell for him to hear.

"The Metropolitan owes much to the professor, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MARMADUKE?" barked Winifred Postlethwaite.

"Professor John took the metro? What a funny idea! We don't travel anywhere other than by motorcar, Winifred and I," Marmaduke finally replied.

Conscious of being in familiar territory and... being appreciated for his true value, Henry Jones decided to address a subject close to his heart.

"Madam, I can sense you are a woman of taste, a woman who is not influenced by passing fads. I wonder if I might ask you a question."

Mrs. Postlethwaite froze in a worthy pose: a finger in the air, she held her cup between her thumb and forefinger, her eyebrows raised a good centimeter, chin up like the prow of a ship, halfway between sitting and standing in the comfort of her Louis XV armchair.

"Do not worry, professor, express yourself freely," commanded the dowager.

"Well, then. Hmm... the question is delicate," Henry Jones saw fit to clarify, clearing his throat. "That is: what do you think of the First Manifestation of contemporary European art, which is taking place right now at the Armory Show, on 25th Street?"

At the mere mention of the name, Mrs. Postlethwaite sank with all her weight in her chair, as if struck with apoplexy. Then, in a whisper:

"It is truly... a scandal..." she murmured.

Mr. Postlethwaite must have had selective deafness, for suddenly a lewd twinkle appeared in his

eyes.

"You mean the *Nude Descending a Staircase*, by Marcel Duchamp?" he intervened in a bantering tone. "I find it rather... refreshing, don't you agree, Professor Jones?"

Outraged, Henry Jones looked at his cup of tea.

"You'll forgive me, dear sir, if I prefer... another kind of refreshment."

And he swallowed his cup in one gulp.

It was at this naked moment Indy chose to interfere in the conversation:

"Mr. Wilson told us of his plan to cross the Florida Straits. I find this a rather bold idea. Indeed, if we could be useful, we would be delighted to accompany him to Miami."

Hearing this, Indy's father choked and nearly spit out his tea. He managed to avoid the worst, but in the violence of his reaction, his red bow tie popped off.

"By God! I... I do not know what to say... I'm so embarrassed," stammered the scarlet professor, nearly bursting the collar of his fancy yellow jacket.

"Professor Jones, do not apologize. These things happen...," she conceded.

"Hmm...! Returning to Indiana's proposition," Woodrow responded, "it would be a great pleasure to have you here in Miami."

Henry Jones was caught in a tough spot: on one hand, he could not afford to raise a stink with his guests, especially after the incident with the bow tie. The other hand, he could not tolerate the rudeness of Indy making that proposal without consulting his father beforehand.

"What do you say, Dad?" asked the boy. "If I



remember correctly, weren't you going to see one of your friends in Florida?"

The academic frowned.

"But of course, you know better than I," insisted Indy. "He's the man who moved there two years ago. After building the first bridge between the city and Miami Beach? His name was Montand... or Monblanc? You wanted to go see him about the Holy Grail..."

"Maybe," Professor Jones admitted, "but I remind you that I came here to study a 10th century manuscript and I haven't had time to go to the library. Moreover, we should have returned several days ago and I don't want you missing any more school."

"Me neither, I don't want to miss school," added a little timid voice.

Indy turned about to shoot Herman a scowl.

"Then again... I'll defer to your decision, professor," corrected the latter, sheepishly.

Henry Jones could not always determine with certainty where his best interests lay. Instead of letting Indy go off with Herman, which would have allowed him to study his manuscript in peace, he resolved to indulge his taste for contradiction. Because, and this was perhaps his greatest flaw, he had in him the spirit of contradiction. He held it in his Scottish heritage, probably...

"My decision is made!" he said suddenly, wiping his chin. "It is out of the question, Junior!"

"You never let me do anything!" Indy protested, beside himself. "Whenever I suggest something interesting, you refuse. I think you do it on purpose, just to annoy me!"

This outburst, impertinent to say the least, cast a chill in the lounge of the Postlethwaites. The hostess was not familiar with this kind of rebellion. The wise Marmaduke, who had seen other such incidents, decided to intervene.

"Come, my friends! To paraphrase an old expression of my British ancestors, this is a storm in a teacup. I assure you, dear Professor Jones, that your son takes no risk with my future son-in-law. Today is Thursday: if our two adventurers leave tonight, they will arrive tomorrow night in Florida, and Indiana will be in school Monday or Tuesday. Meanwhile, you will have time to study your ancient text. What do you say?"

Assaulted on his right flank and attacked by surprise on his left side, the academic gave up the fight without further complaint.

"I say... I say we all go to Florida, and that's that. I have decided!"

"*You* have decided," quipped Indy.

"*He* has decided," lamented Herman, who was beginning to wonder if he would ever again see his beloved native Utah.

For the duration of the long, long train trip to Miami, the professor spent his time muttering, and Herman spent it eating. It was those small cucumber sandwiches of Mrs. Postlethwaite; far from having filled him, on the contrary they had just whetted his appetite. So he had to "take care of the eatables," as he said before boarding the train.

For their part, Indy and Woodrow discussed aviation, while Norma and Cornelia chatted non-

stop.

“You say you made an airplane *by yourself*?!” Indy said, enraptured. “That’s quite an accomplishment.”

“Hmm... yes, but it’s actually a seaplane,” specified Woodrow, as if the difference was obvious.

“A seaplane?” Indy asked, dumbfounded. “You mean a plane that goes underwater?”

“No, a plane that ‘lands’ on the water, so to speak. You see, Indy, I’m brave but not foolhardy! If I have a mechanical problem halfway between Miami and the Bahamas, what would I do with a normal plane?”

It did not take long to Indy to find the answer.

“You’d sink straight to the bottom... While if you could... land, you’d have a chance of walking away.”

“That’s right. In addition, my aircraft’s equipped with both wheels and floats. I was inspired by the seaplane of Glenn Curtiss. He flew for the first time in February 1911. I was there. You should have seen it! With a more powerful engine, I’m virtually certain to succeed.”

Woodrow leaned toward his companion.

“And you know, Indy, in my plane, there are two seats. I hope to convince someone to accompany me. It’s a question of safety, you know?”

Indy understood perfectly. He wriggled in his seat, as if facing the army of giant mosquitoes he had encountered in Alaska¹.

“You mean you need an assistant and... that you haven’t found anyone yet?”

¹See *Young Indiana Jones and the Phantom of the Klondike*, in the same collection.

"Exactly," Woodrow confirmed with a nod.

"But you need probably an experienced professional. A man who's already logged several hours in the air. And most importantly, someone who does not need to return to school on Monday..." Indy concluded, ruefully.

Woodrow shook his head vigorously.

"Who said you had to go back to school Monday?"

"My father," Indy replied in a harsh tone.

"And who said that you should always listen to your father?" Woodrow asked again. "If I had listened to mine, I would have ended up a teacher or doctor! Surely not an aviator!"

This profession of faith greatly impressed the young boy. That was well spoken! In England, suffragettes campaigned for the right to vote; well, young Indiana Jones would launch a liberation movement of oppressed youth. And for now, he voted in his first show of hands: who was willing to attempt to cross the Florida Straits in a seaplane?

"Me!" Indy exclaimed, raising his right hand. "I swear it!"

Professor Jones, grumbling, tore himself from reading his book on the Crusades.

"And what exactly do you swear, Junior?" he asked, taking off his glasses to check their cleanliness.

Indy's first reaction was to push his head down, hoping the storm would pass by itself. But he received a nudge in the ribs.

"It's time, Indy," Woodrow muttered. "You've got to take the plunge. A little courage!"

Courage, Indy had plenty. But he didn't always

choose the right moment to confront his father.

“Well, uh... I swear that I will accompany Woodrow in crossing the Florida Straits.”

He blurted it out, without taking a breath. Now, he waited for the professor’s reaction.

As if nothing had happened, he slipped on his glasses again and resumed his reading, imperturbable. After only a few seconds, and without lifting his eyes from his book, he bellowed with authority:

“It-is-out-of-the-ques-tion, Junior.”

Of oysters, shells and... a ghost

Unbeknown to Indy, his “classmate,” Herman, had let out a smirk: Thank God! The professor had decided to submit “Junior” to reason. Hadn’t Indy had enough for this ride, all these perilous adventures, all of these hurried chases? Wasn’t he tired of always playing hide and seek with death?

Herman Mueller, meanwhile, had had enough. More than enough. Up to his neck! And he came to wonder secretly if he should not start a movement to defend teenagers oppressed by their best friend.

“From the time we exit this train until we arrive at our hotel,” Professor Jones announced in a calm but intractable voice, “you will not leave my side by more than an inch, Junior.”

Herman drank his milk!

“If you ever disobey me, you will be deprived of weekends with the Scouts. Instead, you will weed the garden and repaint the shutters of the house.”

“What? Indy’s private weekend with the Scouts?!”

Now, Herman was no longer laughing. Indeed, Indy always came to his aid in case of trouble, Indy defended him against the other boys, Indy carried his supplies when Herman was exhausted. In short, Indy was his guardian angel. Without him, these trips were a nightmare. He absolutely had to intervene!

"Uh... I'm sure Indy would never do such a thing, right, Indy?" he asked in a shaky voice. "Eh? Say, Indy, you wouldn't do that?"

"No, he would not do that," assured the professor. "Because he remembers telling me this very morning: 'Ultimately, of the two of us, it's you who have the most sense.' He cannot have forgotten already, right, Junior?"

Behind his round glasses, the eyes of Henry Jones probed the face of his son. He felt them, and kept his head bowed, with a stubborn pout.

Once in Miami, the small group went to their hotel. Woodrow's home was too small to accommodate everyone, and it was not appropriate for Cornelia sleep under the same roof as her fiancé! Fortunately, the Royal Palm Hotel was located very near the station. And this is where the professor, Herman, Norma, Cornelia, and—perhaps...—Indy, were to reside. Because he didn't intend to make a stink in this luxury hotel. He longed to join Woodrow in his "dingy hangar, in the middle of nowhere."

At the hotel, Henry Jones, true to form, began to assign rooms: the best view for the girls, the smallest for the "children," and the most spacious for himself. After all his pompous hot air about

sacrificing for others!

Indy was champing at the bit. Woodrow had announced the date of his departure for "the plunge" as the very next day at noon. Now that he possessed the necessary part, Woodrow considered himself finally ready. He had tinkered with the engine itself, drawing on inventions patented in previous years by several manufacturers. If he succeeded his feat, he also hoped to file a patent.

Not waiting, he had abandoned Cornelia, Indy and the others to return as quickly as his hangar. Stepping lightly, he jumped into a horsedrawn carriage driven by one of his friends, who was waiting for him at the station. The adventure was beckoning him! The feat was looming on the horizon! He could not afford to lose one minute, especially as a storm warning had been issued for the following day.

During dinner, Indy did not open his mouth. His father was watching him out of the corner of his eye. In his absence, he gave Herman the responsibility for watching "Junior" wherever he went. If he "deserted," the boy's mission was to inform the professor on the spot. Horrified at the idea of having to go to scout camp alone, Herman took his mission to heart.

At precisely 4:30, Indy decided to visit Norma. Immediately, Herman leaped into action. When Indy had entered the ladies' room, Herman rushed to Professor Jones to make his report. The latter had called him a fool and he was ordered to return to "chaperoning Junior."

At 5:45, Indy had come out of the girls' room,

arm-in-arm with Norma.

"We're going to get some fresh air, Hermie. Well, you should tell Dad," Indy spat with a hint of contempt in his voice.

Herman stood there, unable to decide: should he go and report that decision to the professor, or follow the lovebirds? "Fatso," as his classmates nicknamed him, chose the first option... which led again to his being treated like a simpleton.

"While you were coming to tell me they were on their way!" growled the Indy's father. "And I told you to stick to him like a shoe!"

Herman swore, a bit late, not be taken advantage of again. Next time, he promised, he would follow Indy.

However, the professor had been reassured about the obedience of his son upon seeing him return with Norma arm-in-arm, a little before dinner time.

"Bravo, Junior, I see that I can trust you."

Indy nodded his head, like a disciplined boy. But he harbored a secret project that, if successful, would greatly upset his father.

"These are really excellent oyyysters," Cornelia raved at dinner.

"They come from Apalachicola, madaaame," said the server in the same tone. "I think I can say that they are the best in the world."

"You've tasted all the oysters in the world?" Indy quipped.

"Junior, hold your tongue!" the professor barked, wiping his beard. "And apologize to this gentleman."

Again, Indy obediently complied. All this was part of his plan.

"These beignets are a truuuuuly deliiciious," exclaimed Cornelia ten minutes later.

"That's a local specialty, madaaame," explained the server, watching Indy from the corner of his eye.

But this time, he issued no comment.

The remainder of the dinner took place without incident, except that Herman requested three servings of Apalachicola oysters and found a way to ingest a good forty fried clams.

"Sir... was hungry," observed the server with wonder. "It is a pleasure to serve! If all customers were like him, we would have already made a fortune."

The professor, who had the privilege of settling the bill later, took it upon himself not to issue a new remonstrance to lucky Herman. The latter looked like a satisfied Buddha, ready to "hibernate" for the next three months.

"Tomorrow I will visit my friend Igor Monblanc," Henry Jones announced, rising from the table. "Indy, you will accompany me."

"Sure, Dad," replied the boy. "Just tell me... what time you plan to get up tomorrow morning."

Sensing a scam, the professor raised his eyebrows.

"And why do you want to know, Junior?"

"Why, Dad, so I can bring you your breakfast in bed."

Now, the academic no longer had any doubt that Junior was preparing some scheme.

Five minutes after he slipped into bed, Herman, the "night watchman" hired by Henry Jones, sank into the sleep of the just. In the next room, Cor-

nelia and Norma giggled secretly. As for Professor Jones, he listened, his nightcap pulled low over his head. He doubted that his son would part company at night. Indy didn't know Miami, and he couldn't have traveled more than a kilometer or two during his walk in the afternoon with Norma at his side. However, Woodrow's hangar was several kilometers away, at the other end of Miami Beach.

Reassured by this reasoning, the professor fell asleep dreaming of the 10th century manuscript that was waiting in a library in... New York!

He was right to sleep, however, because Indy did the same. Indeed, a rough and long day awaited him, and he would need all his strength to attempt to cross the Florida Straits in a seaplane, as Woodrow's co-pilot.

Herman was still asleep when Indy opened his eyes the next morning at 8 o'clock. As promised, he went immediately to seek his father's breakfast on the ground floor of the Royal Palm Hotel and then rushed to his room.

"Who is it?" said the sleepy voice of the professor.

"It's me, Indiana. I brought you your breakfast."

Indy opened the door, put the tray on the floor, closed it and ran off down the hall. His senses alert, Henry Jones jumped up, put on his slippers and rushed in pursuit of the fugitive, in his shirt and nightcap. He opened the door of his room, looked left, then right: there was not a soul. When he reached the ground floor, he asked the service staff



and the flabbergasted hotel guests if they had seen a boy wearing a Stetson.

"No," replied one of them with a smile. "But I just saw a Scottish ghost. You think it's the Loch Ness monster?"

Insulted, he turned back. He never thought that the residents of a state as "backwater" as Florida might be able to recognize the "hint" of Scottish accent that had never left him.

Arriving on the first floor, the professor knocked on the boys' door. Inside, he heard the hum of what must have been Herman.

"Confound it! He's lost Junior!" he mused. "What a slacker! I never should have trusted him..."

Then a familiar voice was heard.

"Who's there?"

It was the voice of Indy!

"Junior? Is that you?"

The door opened on the boy's smiling face. Freshly showered, he had already prepared his suitcase.

"Have you finished your breakfast, Dad?" he asked in an innocent tone. "So when are we going to Miami Beach? I'm looking forward to meeting your friend."

"Hmm... I haven't quite finished, no. But... hmm... I was wondering if you wanted to join me... hmm..."

"That's kind of you, Dad, but I've already eaten. You know, I've been awake for more than an hour, so I started reading the book you recommended to me. You know, the one about the Crusades... This book really interests me, because I also intend to launch a crusade."

"Really?" What kind of crusade?" asked the

professor, with curiosity.

Indy began to nod, then rewarded his father with a sharp smile.

“You’ll see, Dad. It’s a surprise for later; don’t worry, you can enjoy your breakfast in peace. As you see, I have decided not to run away.”

He might have added:

“Not yet.”

The Sea Hawk

At 10 o'clock, when he could wait no longer, Indy woke Herman and went knocking on the door of his father's chamber.

"Dad? Are you ready? When do we start?"

At the impatience manifested by his son, Henry Jones rejoiced. Junior seemed to have abandoned his crazy schemes. But why the hell was he so eager to meet Igor Monblanc, septuagenarian archeologist, world's foremost authority on the Bayeux Tapestry?

"Within an hour or two, son. I want to finish this chapter on the death of St. Louis."

"But, Dad, you'll have plenty of time to read tonight. Right now, I'm bored to death. If you want me to stay with you, you've got to keep me occupied!" pleaded Indy.

Henry Jones had to admit that his son's argument was full of common sense.

"All right. Give me fifteen minutes and then meet me downstairs with Herman."

Indy began a Indian scalp dance in the hall-

way of the hotel. His plan—not to mention his plot—was going wonderfully.

Fifteen minutes later, everyone found themselves downstairs, the ladies included. Indeed, it was decided that the carriage would take the professor, Indy, Herman and Norma to Igor Monblanc, then continue on its way with Cornelia, who wanted to see Woodrow off. Professor Jones, to prevent any temptation on Indy's part—and especially not to rub salt into the wound—had thought it best not to watch the adventurer's departure.

The morning mist—common along the Atlantic Ocean—had given way to bright sunshine. The professor was delighted to surprise his old friend Igor, whom he had not seen in over ten years. The ladies and Herman engaged in their favorite activities: the former chatted, while "Fatso" indulged his appetite. He barely had time to swallow a dozen donuts before being startled by Indy...

"But the day was not far off when the oppressed, when the slaves would revolt against their masters!"

They soon came to the bridge linking Miami to Miami Beach. Built in 1912, it remained the largest wooden bridge in the world.

"*Whewww!*" exclaimed Herman, his mouth full. "And we will go... *munch... munch...* over this endless gateway... *munch... munch...*? You're sure the pillars are strong, right?"

"Shut up and eat!" Indy replied, his temper hot.

If he had held the reins of the horses, he would have made sure to whip the two lazy nags that

pulled them. At this rate, they would never arrive in time...

"We can only maaaaarvel at the produuuct of human intelligence," Cornelia offered. "Here, take my Woody, for example. I never told him sooo, of course, but I think he's a kind of geeenius!"

"In this case, you ought to tell him," Norma replied.

"Oh no!" Cornelia persisted, her affections coming across strongly. "If I told him, he would start to believe it, and then he would be good for nothing, ha, ha!"

As if the crossing was not going slowly enough, the driver stopped for a moment in the middle of the wooden bridge.

"Enjoy the scenery! What a view! What beauty!"

"What rotten luck!" added Indy to himself. But what could he do? To make matters worse, the professor began a presentation on the history of Miami.

"By 1567 the Spanish established a base for their treasure seekers. You see, they had..."

Indy was not listening. He fortunately refrained from throwing everyone into the water and seizing the reins.

Finally, the convoy moved off again, and the rest of the trip passed without further interruption. They arrived at the door of Igor Monblanc at 11:15.

"Well, this is where our paths diverge," said Professor Jones to Cornelia. "Please wish Woodrow the best of luck from me. I look forward to hearing the outcome of this bold attempt, to say the least. Come on, you all. We must not delay Cornelia any longer."

The two boys exited without flinching. But Norma remained on board.

"If you do not mind, I would like to accompany Cornelia. I do not want to leave her alone. You never know. I will join you at the hotel in three days."

No, the professor saw no objection. In truth, he was not unhappy that Norma would leave them be for some time. Indeed, Junior enjoyed this girl's company with the troubling enthusiasm of a boy of fourteen.

So it was with a happy heart that Professor began whistling in the driveway leading to the house of Igor Monblanc. Arriving on the porch, he rang the doorbell.

"Igor! Guess who's here! I wanted to surprise you," he called out, smiling.

But of the two of them, Igor Monblanc was not the most surprised. For when the latter opened the door, Henry Jones turned to present his son... and saw that he had gone off. He found himself face to face with Herman, who wanted to disappear into a mouse hole.

The professor turned and ran towards the dusty road leading to Woodrow's hangar, located more than ten miles away. Alas! It was too late. He could no longer distinguish the cloud of dust in the distance. Indy had slipped away from him.

Betrayed by the one he cherished most in the world, Henry Jones went up the aisle with a heavy heart, as if he carried all the misery of the world on his shoulders.

He told his flabbergasted friend what had happened.

"I would have proposed we pursue with my carriage," Igor Monblanc apologized. "But my poor animal has been sick for a week, and the nearest neighbor is a mile away. By the time we get there and then get you on to Smith's hangar, your son will probably have been in the air for a long time!"

Woodrow Smith had difficulty getting to sleep the night before. He imagined himself already above the Straits of Florida, flying his seaplane. He had checked his checklist a hundred times in his head. He must have overlooked a detail, because his engine was "hiccuping" from time to time. Finally, he found the solution: a shot of lime was enough. Desperate diseases must often have the simplest remedies.

On seeing Cornelia, Indy and Norma, he could not contain his joy: he threw his arms around his beloved, ignoring etiquette, then kissed the hand of Norma and finally turned to Indy:

"So, my young friend? You're coming with me, yes or no?"

The aircraft, dubbed *The Sea Hawk*, quietly awaited its occupants, securely moored to its dock. The sea was calm, the sky clear. Only a light breeze was blowing Norma's brown hair from her shoulders.

"Of course I will!" Indy replied enthusiastically.

There was a downside: not only would his father be angry, but also worried, Indy knew, and this thought made him feel guilty. But if all went well, he would be back the next day at noon. Woodrow had decided to refuel in the Bahamas, and he had already planned where he would spend the night.

That, the professor knew: he would not have to worry about it. Upon his return, Indy would weather a storm of criticism, and life would resume its course. This at least is what he hoped...

"I just make the final checks," Woodrow announced, "and frankly I see no reason to wait any longer. So, Indy, suit up and climb aboard!"

"What exciiitment!" Cornelia whined. "But I would not enjoy the voyaaaage, no! Brrr! In this single instance, I get the chiiills."

"As for me, it would not make me afraid," Norma said, chin up. "Besides, I dream of accomplishing such a feat myself," she said with a pensive expression.

Indy quickly pulled on his protective suit and helmet. His heart pounding, he approached Norma and kissed her forehead.

"Good luck, Indy. I will await your return with impatience. More importantly, behave yourself!"

"Trust me, you know me!" Indy affirmed.

Exactly. It was because she knew him that Norma could not close her eyes for fear that Indy would not be back.

"I'll explain how to takeoff aboard a seaplane," Woodrow explained. "It should be placed upwind, that is to say, facing the wind. Then I'll retract the water rudders, then I'll put the engine at full speed and pull back on the stick. When we start to hover over the water, I'll push the stick forward, into a neutral position, so that the rear of the floats don't sink into the water. The plane will build up speed and, at just the right moment, a slight pull on the handle will take us off. You've got it?"

"I heard you loud and clear," said Indy. "Let's



go!”

From the shore, Cornelia and Norma looked at this strange bird push against the wind, then glide over the water, first slowly, and faster and faster, toward its final destination: the Bahamas, two hundred kilometers away. If Woodrow managed this feat, he would secure his name in the history books.

If he failed...

The two girls decided by mutual agreement not to consider it.

A bad surprise

The Sea Hawk's engine purred contentedly under the noonday sun. Indy felt the strange sensation that every human being experiences as they move, suspended in the air, between heaven and earth. He seemed to be stronger, a master of the elements. Everything seemed possible. He felt invincible, like a god. Of course, the hitch was that he risked being plunged to the gentle waves that stretched under him to the horizon. How could this sparkling sea contain so many dangers? How could one believe that, in an instant, it could turn into a tomb for the two airmen?

"So how do you feel, kid?" Woodrow asked, turning around.

He had to shout over the engine noise.

"It's an experience I wouldn't have missed for anything," said the passenger. "I feel like a pioneer, conquering the ocean as my ancestors ventured into the Wild West. This crossing is *my* 'American dream' to me!"

"I understand," Woodrow admitted. "I've been

planning this expedition for so many years, I dreamed of it for so long, today I feel like I've finally become myself."

Indy looked around him, experiencing the exhilaration of altitude. He dominated the world because of this strange device.

"I feel what the Wright brothers must have felt, just a little over ten years ago, when they undertook their first flight of nearly three hundred meters!" exclaimed Woodrow. "The world will never be the same if we reach the end of this journey!"

"We won't, we will never be the same," Indy added thoughtfully.

"And you know, Indy, I'm sure one day, perhaps not too far in the future, say two or three centuries, we'll be able to fly to the moon!"

About this, Indy was not convinced. Certainly, he had read *From the Earth to the Moon* by Jules Verne. But the boy thought that this kind of feat would remain in the realm of imagination for a long time.

"Hold on!" Woodrow said suddenly. "I hadn't expected... I don't understand what... But the weather report did not mention..."

Indy listened. Woodrow's words reached him in pieces, like an engine that had misfired. He stretched his neck outside, trying to determine the cause of the problem.

"By God!" he then exclaimed. "It looks... it looks like..."

"...fog," Woodrow concluded, turning, stony faced. "We'll have to navigate with a compass."

"But where did this fog come from?" asked Indy.

"There are two possibilities," Woodrow explained. "The water temperature may be greater than that of the air, and water vapor is formed by condensation as it cools. Or a mass of warm moist air may have moved over the surface of the colder ocean. I favor the second hypothesis."

The aircraft was now just a few hundred meters from the cottony mass caressing the blue waters. It looked like an insurmountable wall, the boundary of another world, where all airmen lose their bearings and become unable to control their destiny.

"Cover your nose with your scarf," Woodrow advised. "And above all, don't panic! It's possible that this pea soup only extends about two or three hundred meters..."

Indy nodded, determined to sit through his troubles patiently. The crossing of this thick layer would last just a few seconds, minutes at most. On the other side, he would probably see the sun and the sparkling ocean in all its glory.

"Look out..." Woodrow announced, "we enter into the unknown in five... four... three... two... one second."

The seacraft plunged into the cool mist, and suddenly everything went silent. The engine noise itself had subsided. But the air temperature dropped suddenly, and Indy found himself shivering. *The Sea Hawk* must have also felt the thermometer's decline, as it began to vibrate more strongly than before, and then shaken by alarming tremors.

"It's some sort of turbulence," Woodrow explained. "I regret not being able to install an autopilot. Curtiss added one at some point last year, but I didn't have the means to get it..."

"You mean you're not sure you can continue to fly this bird?"

"Oh yeah, sure, but it's going to be tiring."

It soon became clear that the pea soup extended over more than a few hundred meters. And even several kilometers!

"How long would you say that we've been swimming in this soup?" Indy finally asked, chilled.

"I'd say twenty minutes," Woodrow ventured. "Maybe twenty-five. It's strange, really. Nobody could have predicted that... But there's something stranger still."

"Oh yeah?" Indy asked, suddenly worried. "What?"

"Well, the compass is acting funny, as if we were crossing a magnetic field. For ten minutes now, North seems to have an irresistible desire to change positions. I don't know if you noticed, but I veered slightly to the right, then left, then right again to keep my original course. Now, I should have just gone straight. It's weird..."

In spite of himself, Indy began to wonder if he wouldn't have done better to listen to his father. Yes, undoubtedly, Professor Jones had more common sense than his son. On the other hand, it was equally true that the great progress of humanity was not due to sensible people, but to all the dreamers, visionaries, and other idealists of this world. So, between passion and reason, what should he choose?

And at that moment, Indy had just one precise answer. He had but one desire: to see the light at the end of the tunnel. But he couldn't see anything. Nothing filtered through the curtain of

vapor.

“Woodrow? Do you have any idea where we are, how far we’ve come?” Indy inquired, trying to stay calm.

“Hmm... Well, to be honest, no,” Woodrow confessed. “But we have enough fuel for another hour or two. By then, the sky will have cleared, I’m absolutely certain.”

Indy began to doubt the “certainties” of Woodrow Smith. He certainly wouldn’t blame his new friend for getting them into this mess. But he was careful now to trust his judgment too quickly.

Suddenly, Indy felt his stomach rise into his throat. The aircraft had just lost ten meters in one drop!

“Did we fall into an air pocket?” asked Indy.

“No, it’s worse than that,” Woodrow said. “Looks like we have a power problem. It must be the fuel intake pipe. But I was certain I had it installed correctly. It’s probably due to the moisture.”

Another “certainty” had gone up in smoke. Within seconds, their leisure travel had become a nightmare journey! Would they ever arrive in the Bahamas?

The engine seemed to have decided otherwise: it hiccuped to a stop, roared again, then sank into a dead silence... before restarting for a few more cycles.

“I have to do something,” said Woodrow, his tone firm. “Otherwise, we’re headed for disaster.”

“Are you sure?” Indy demanded to know.

“Absolutely certain,” Woodrow said.

“That’s what I was afraid of...” Indy mumbled.

That’s when Woodrow undertook to describe

to how to land a seaplane in fog. A description that would send a chill up anyone's spine...

"The problem, when you want to land on calm water and you can't see anything, is evaluating your altitude. Ideally, we'd be near a ship or some sort of floating object, but we do not have anything like that at our disposal. So we'll go down as slowly as possible, praying to heaven that the engine will give us some juice. Because I've never done a glide landing..."

Indy was careful not to issue any comment that would transmit his fear to the pilot. Obviously, Woodrow had retained control of his nerves and his clear reasoning. Under the circumstances, it was the best that either of them could hope for.

Slowly, shaken by convulsive movements, *The Sea Hawk* began its descent to the silent waves. In a moment they would turn into improvised landing strip... or watery grave.

The time had come to say their final prayers.

Entrapment

The descent seemed interminable to Indy. And yet, the aircraft was losing altitude rapidly. Way too fast! Woodrow was struggling in front of him, gripping the stick, head outstretched in the hope of distinguishing the ocean surface. Then he leaned forward to operate mysterious knobs, pressing strange buttons.

In the end, there was total silence. No more engine, no more propeller. They couldn't even hear the hiss of the aircraft cabin, cutting through the air outside. Indy was not a man to lose his cool, but the prospect of being swallowed up without trace froze him in horror. Within a few seconds, he saw his life flash before him: his fights with Indiana, his dog; time spent laughing with his mother, Anna, who died too young; his adventures in France, India, China, America South, the Klondike; and then Norma, so beautiful, so strong, with a voice so melodious.

Suddenly, the boy pulled himself together. He remembered his voyage on the *Titanic*, the previ-

ous year¹. Another crossing of the Atlantic that had nearly cost him his life. But he had made it. And had he survived, because he had never doubted his chances. Because he had fought to the end.

“Woodrow?” he called.

“Yes, Indy, I’m listening,” said the airman in a mournful tone.

The boy couldn’t see him, but he could sense the despair on Woodrow’s face. He was about to give up, close his eyes and prepare himself to meet his doom.

“I trust you, Woodrow,” Indy said in a firm voice. “I know you can get us out of there. Norma told me that Cornelia considers you a genius. So do I. I am sure that by keeping your calm and staying focused, you’ll find a solution. You have to believe, Woodrow, you have to believe!”

This statement landed like a bomb in the aviator’s ears. Not that he was particularly flattered by the confidence that Indy him. But learning, on the brink of death, that his beloved considered him a genius, when he had always felt that she took him for a failure, that that was enough to jolt him from his paralysis.

Woodrow gathered all his mental and physical energy. In his head, he went over every step of assembling the damn fuel intake pipe. Where had he gone wrong? Was the fault was due to ambient moisture, and if so, what should he do? Woodrow suddenly was struck by lightning, or rather a flash of... genius. What if the engine was just flooded?

¹See *Young Indiana Jones and the Titanic Adventure*, in the same collection.

After all this time he had struggled to inject fuel, maybe he had flooded it. And it was likely that if he could somehow expel the overflow, the engine would come alive. And then it would be possible to stop the seaplane's mad descent toward the sea.

Yes, but he'd have to play the acrobat, turning the propeller to give it enough of a jolt so that the engine would restart...

Woodrow explained his plan to his passenger.

"No problem!" Indy immediately cried. "I'll go. You stay where you are! I wouldn't know what to do with all those instruments in front of you!"

"No, it's too dangerous," Woodrow changed his mind. "I'll look for another solution."

"There is no other way," replied Indy. "Who knows? We're probably only a few dozen meters from the water's surface. This is our last chance..."

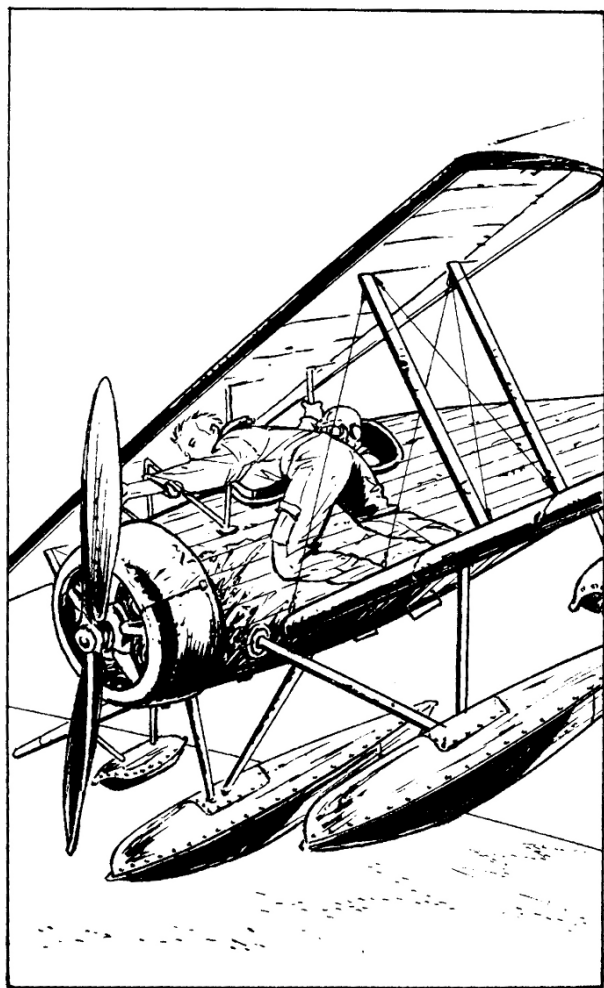
Without giving Woodrow any chance to stop him, Indy climbed out of his seat. Then, clinging the vertical struts and bracing wires, he managed to find enough balance to put one hand on the propeller, without burning himself against the engine. With eyelids half-closed to protect himself from the freezing droplets suspended in the air, he applied a single push on the propeller. Without success.

"Are you ready, Woodrow? I'll try again," he screamed.

"Get ready, Indy. In five seconds, four, three, two... one... zero!"

Indy pushed with all his might, and his heart leaped in his chest when he saw the propeller make three full turns. Unfortunately, the engine would not listen.

"It's alright!" Woodrow assured him. "You can



try again in five seconds, four, three, two... one... zero!"

This time, the propeller turned five times and at the precise moment when it threatened to stop again, a healthy roar was heard. A broad smile appeared on the faces of two survivors.

"Come and sit down quickly," ordered Woodrow. "Otherwise, the craft will be unbalanced and its nose will stick on landing."

Indy didn't have to be told twice. With the agility of a monkey, he immediately resumed his place, greeted by an encouraging engine rumble. It wasn't long before *The Sea Hawk* found a mostly horizontal position and Woodrow turned to address Indy with a nod. But when the two adventurers believed themselves safe, the reality appeared to them in all its horror: a hole in the wall of cotton revealed to them that the aircraft was actually only four or five meters above the water. This would not have been so alarming if the engine had kept rumbling happily... and if fireworks had not exploded at the front of the craft.

"By God! What do we do now?" cried Indy.

"This time, I don't know," Woodrow confessed. "But one thing is certain: we are out of options. We have to land immediately."

"That's wise..." Indy agreed, closing his eyes.

The Sea Hawk had regained speed, just in time to disturb the still calm waters of the Florida Straits. The initial shock was rather harsh, as the vehicle tilted to one side, balancing precariously on a single float, then teetered to the other side, before stabilizing and dragging the glassy sea, in a silence that was only broken by a delicate lapping sound.

"Well done, Woodrow!" exclaimed Indy, applauding. "You may not have gotten us to the Bahamas, but you saved our lives! I'm satisfied!"

Conflicted by the pain of failure and a relief at having escaped certain death, the pilot was still for a long time, his head bent forward, as in deep meditation. Then he straightened up and announced:

"Now we just have to wait until the fog lifts... or a boat rams into us."

In his heart, Indy found that maybe Woodrow Smith was a genius, but his pessimistic philosophy was truly "foolproof"!

After several hours of waiting, Woodrow finally exclaimed:

"The worst part is that I have no idea of where we are. I still hoped to avoid crossing the edge of the Bermuda Triangle," he lamented with a mysterious tone.

"The Bermuda Triangle?" asked Indy.

"You've never heard of it? That's surprising for a globetrotter like you. Well, you know that many ships have disappeared in an area contained within a triangle, whose three points are Bermuda, Florida and Puerto Rico. What makes these disappearances interesting is that no one has found an explanation. They occurred as often in good weather as in inclement weather, and several very experienced sailors were among the victims. I'm thinking of Joshua Slocum, the first sailor to travel around the world solo. Not just anybody, you know! One might think that these disappearances were the work of pirates, but that's not it. In 1840, the *Rosalie*, a French vessel, was found near Nas-

sau, with no one on board, but its valuable cargo was intact.”

Indy looked at the fog suspiciously. If this was the kind of pea soup you could fall into without warning, it was hardly surprising that accidents happened. Especially if the fog did not rise for several hours...

“Tell me, Woody—do you mind if I call you Woody? It’s more... friendly.”

“I insist, Indy...”

“I don’t know if you’ve come to the same conclusion, but personally, I’ve lost all my bearings. We don’t know where we are or how far we’ve come, or what time it is or even how long we’ve been prisoners of this wall of fog.”

That’s when his attention was attracted by a strange phenomenon: he had just seen a light in the distance through the fog.

“You see it too?” he asked.

“What do you mean? No, I don’t see anything.”

Woodrow scanned the cottony darkness in vain, but could distinguish nothing.

“But there!” Indy insisted. “The pale light in the distance. Come on, make an effort, Woody. Follow my finger!”

He pointed index finger towards an imaginary halo.

“I still see nothing,” said Woody. “But it reminds me of what was reported by the sailors who were part of Christopher Columbus’ crew on his second voyage to the New World: they experienced mysterious events. First, their compass went out of alignment, and then they spoke of a strange light that appeared in the distance, on into the night,

and finally, they mentioned a giant fireball that fell into the sea..”

Indy shook his head skeptically.

“I find the story of the fireball a little hard to swallow. It could just have been the setting sun, right?”

Woodrow said nothing. His ears pricked up, he seemed to be listening to something else.

“Do you hear?” he asked, on the alert.

“Do I hear what?”

“Some sort of vibration. Sounds like the cry of a whale, very sharp, plaintive.”

This time, Indy began to doubt both of their mental states. One had visions, and one heard whale cries in the middle of the Florida Straits! Truly, this Bermuda Triangle was the center of strange, if not supernatural, phenomena!

The ball of sharks

Two hours passed before the fog finally cleared. Two hours during which the aircraft drifted at the mercy of ocean currents.

"I had begun to think that we wouldn't see the end of the day!" Woodrow lamented.

But Indy did not listen. He scanned the horizon, squinting. No, it wasn't possible! He had to be hallucinating, like the sailors of Columbus four centuries earlier!

"Hey, Woody, you see what I see?"

"What? Where? What did you say? You can still see a light on the horizon?"

"No, I can make out something much more interesting and much more unexpected."

"What, tell me! Come on, spit it out!" Woody said impatiently.

"LAND! LAND!" Indy exclaimed triumphantly, waving his Stetson. "We arrived at our destination! It's a miracle!"

"The Bahamas?!" exclaimed Woody in turn. "But then... I made it! Sorry, we made it. Because

I don't know if you realized, Indy, but without you, I would have been lost. Alone, I could never could have gotten the damn engine started."

Indy knew it... but his natural modesty forbade him from saying so to his "host". He simply put his hat in place and look down.

"Now the problem is simple," Indy analyzed. "How do we reach the coast? Can you swim over there?"

"I doubt it," confessed Woodrow. "I can swim, but not such a long distance. In addition, I wouldn't want to abandon the aircraft. You never know what might happen, and without it we are lost."

"In that case, there is no choice. I must throw myself into the water! Brrr!"

He immediately took off his headgear, and dived. From *The Sea Hawk*, Woodrow watched Indy swim into a perfect crawl. "The boy definitely possesses all the talents! No wonder that Norma is so interested in him," thought the aviator with admiration.

Indy had covered about three hundred meters, when he saw a boat leaving the island and coming towards him.

"Great!" he thought. "That'll save me some swimming."

The problem was that he then saw something else between him and the boat. Now, this was something that to all appearances was... a shark fin. And this fin approached him at lightning speed. Panicked, Indy turned to measure distance: the aircraft was now too far. He wouldn't have the time to return before being overtaken by the shark. And anyway, swimming back was the worst solution. Of course, Indy knew that the man-eating

sharks were attracted to splashing. That's why he stopped in the water, barely moving his legs just enough to keep from sinking.

The fin was no more than five, four, three... two... one meter from him! The shark took a circular motion around its prey. Silently, without even breathing, the boy recited again his last prayers. He might succeed in deceiving his enemy for a few seconds, but not much more. And the boat that had left the island was still more than five hundred meters away...

Suddenly, Indy received a blow. The shark had just struck a good head butt in his right hip. "Hey! I am not a punching bag!" protested Indy in his mind. Then the shark began to circle around him, as in an Indian scalp dance. There remained only one solution: to howl loudly. This might scare the animal, and the occupants of the boat would travel quickly if they knew that a shark was threatening to devour the shipwrecked survivors!

"AHOY! CAN YOU HEAR ME? I AM BEING ATTACKED BY A SHARK! HELP!"

Clearly, the animal was not at all disturbed by the noise. It continued its inspection with determination. Had it ever encountered a human in its life? Had it ever... eaten one??

BANG! Indy suddenly heard. BANG! BANG!

Shots! The boat's crew came to shoot the shark, which had been hit and was bleeding..

Two minutes later, the *Mary Celeste* came up to Indy. On board, the boy saw several sailors and a bearded man wearing a captain's hat.

In all his joy, Indy turned toward the seaplane



to signal to Woodrow, who had watched the scene with horror. It was a lucky decision, because he discovered that three other fins were heading toward him at high speed.

"The one we just killed wasn't carnivorous," said one of the sailors, "but I bet those three haven't found anything to put in their mouths for at least three days."

"Yes, my feeling is that it's their friend's blood that attracts them," said another.

A strange light shone in his eyes.

"But... but... but... in this case, w... wouldn't it be better to k... k... k... kill them too," Indy stammered, petrified.

The three carnivorous sharks were no more than ten meters from him. The two sailors turned to their captain. The latter nodded and three shots were fired on the spot. The fins sank into the depths of the ocean.

"*Whheeww!!*" Indy let out. If Herman was there, he would undoubtedly have had a heart attack. "Gentlemen, I owe you one," he said, gratefully.

The sailors hoisted him aboard the *Mary Celeste* and the boy shook his mop of blond hair, like a wet dog. The captain approached him suspiciously. Then he held out his hand.

"Allow me to present myself: Walter McDonald, explorer."

"Indiana Jones, adventurer," replied the boy.

"Adventur...? Ha! Ha! Ha!" McDonald exclaimed. "It's a good one, that. Adventurer! Heh! Heh! Heh!"

He addressed his men with a knowing wink.

"And can you say what kind of adventures you've experienced, young man?"

"Oh, of course," replied Indy, ingenuously. "I encountered an evil gem in Egypt, where I narrowly escaped the bubonic plague; I pulled the Princess Tamar from the clutches of her enemies in Georgia; I was on the *Titanic* when it sank; and recently, I stopped Al Capone in New York. You want me to continue?"

The captain and the sailors contemplated this "alien" with amazement. Should he be taken at his word, or were they dealing with a madman or a simple pathological liar?

"And yet you find time to go to school," McDonald quipped, casting a knowing look to his flock.

"I attend the best school," said Indy. "That of life. And you, Captain McDonald, what do you explore in these parts?" he asked coolly.

"Hmm... At present, we study some... plants that we have reported on in our expeditions. Look, matey, I've roamed all latitudes, so I decided to take a break and spend some time settling down on this deserted island. Nobody knows what I've found with my... team, heh, heh! This place is certainly far from everything, but I find it an acceptable distance from civilization."

"I understand," Indy said, shaking his head.

"But enough talk. We will bring you back to land, you and your friend, and tow your seaplane."

He went up to Indy and whispered:

"You know what? I would like to learn to fly a devilish device like that. You think your boyfriend would give me lessons?"

He smelled of alcohol and tobacco abuse. Indy's

heart stopped. These were not medicinal plants that this master mariner was "studying." Rather sugar cane, from which they make rum. And it was useless to roam all latitudes to find it. It was found in the tropics.

"But tell me, boy. Where'd you come from, like this? On an island in the Bahamas?"

"Not at all. We flew from Miami this morning, and we crossed the Florida Straits for the first time by plane," announced Indy proudly. "Approximately two hundred kilometers non-stop... Well, almost nonstop. Due to a mechanical fault and that damn fog, we had to make an emergency landing."

"You come from... Miami? Really?"

Captain McDonald stroked his beard.

"That's interesting... maybe very interesting," he concluded.

In less than an hour, Woodrow, Indy and sea-plane had found land.

"Do you consider yourself at home like this?" spat McDonald, mockingly. "Roberto will show you your quarters."

The so-called Roberto resembled nothing so much as a large wardrobe. His vocabulary was limited, but his means of expression very persuasive. Woodrow and Indy followed him to a bungalow on the edge of the forest.

"There," stated Roberto, before turning on his heel.

Indy began to ask questions. He would have given anything to know how, exactly, McDonald and his men lived, and why he was so interested in

the aircraft...

The master of the island

“It’s really very kind of the captain and his men to receive us. Without them, we would have been served to the sharks,” Woodrow sighed.

“Perhaps,” replied Indy, “but you should note that McDonald is paying close attention to your seaplane. He even asked me if you would be willing to give him lessons!”

“I have no objection,” replied the naive air genius.

Indy looked up to heaven. Yes, decidedly, Woodrow Smith had his head in the clouds...

“You have no objection? Didn’t you smell his breath? It reeks of rum and tobacco for ten meters around him!”

“Really?” Woodrow was surprised. “Well, no, I hadn’t noticed. But in that case, you’re probably right: either drinking or piloting my seaplane, he will have to choose!”

Indy shuddered. He was soaked to the bone, and the coolness of nightfall did not help to warm him up.

"Until he chooses, I suggest that we explore our surroundings. This mysterious island has piqued my curiosity," he added with a conspiratorial air. "I'd give anything to know its name..."

"Oh, I'm not going to worry about it for tonight!" Woodrow remarked. "I just hope our guests will feed us soon. My stomach is growling, isn't yours?"

"I can almost hear Herman's bungalow door opening." Coincidentally, one of McDonald's men passed by at just at that moment.

"Can I help you?" he asked, with a false kindness.

"Well, to be honest, we'd like a bite to eat, if possible. We've had nothing since this morning, and after such a hectic trip... we're truly starving."

"And how!" exclaimed the sailor, revealing a row of teeth decayed by bad rum. "If you gentlemen would like to come with me. Heh! Heh!"

"It's very kind of you," Indy replied in the same tone. "Are you coming, Woody?"

With his usual skepticism, Indy was suspicious of the offers of the crew of the *Mary Celeste*. And nothing was able to dispel this negative impression. Not the excellent shark stew which was served, accompanied by *pulque*, a fermented drink of Mexican origin, made from local plants. Neither the colorful stories told by Captain McDonald of his adventures in Burma and Nepal. Neither the ability of the sailors to empty one bottle of rum after the other.

"My friends, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for this feast, fit for a king," declared Woodrow emphatically at the end of the meal. "Now if you'll excuse us, we will take a well

earned rest."

Indy would have liked to stay a little longer, just to understand the truth about Captain McDonald...

"You are all excused!" exclaimed the latter, exhaling alcohol vapors. "Ro... Roberto, accompany these gentlemen to their qu... quarters!"

The little scenario from the end of the afternoon was repeated to the last comma. The "wardrobe" led them to their bungalow, opened the door, and muttered: "there" before turning heel and rejoining the group.

Indy had endured it all without flinching. Better not to attract attention by being rebellious from the start. This salutary lesson he had learned from his father. Thinking about him, Indy realized that he must be worried sick, just like Norma, Cornelia and Herman. The two adventurers were scheduled to return to Miami tomorrow, but they were supposed to have alerted the Coast Guard when they arrived in the Bahamas. But they couldn't do anything.

"Cornelia won't sleep well tonight," Indy observed, watching the reaction of his fellow sufferer.

This sudden return to reality at once wiped the smile that hadn't left Woodrow's face since the fog had lifted and they had discovered the mainland. All that mattered to him was that he had managed his feat. But was he really in the Bahamas?

"You're right, Indy. We didn't alert the Coast Guard. I'd guess there's no modern means of communication on this desert island."

"I asked, and I was laughed at," Indy replied sadly. "But I don't intend to rot here much longer.

You'll get to work first thing tomorrow morning, and we'll make our move when the engine is repaired. Until then, I propose to scout the premises quietly. Can you lend me your lantern?"

Woodrow reached into his bag and pulled out the lamp.

"Here, here. But be careful, I beg you!"

"I won't take any chances. You know me..."

Fortunately, the full moon flooded the Bermuda Triangle with a milky light, which would facilitate Indy's task. Unfortunately, as soon as he set foot outside, he found himself face to face with Roberto... just passing by!

The next day, the two survivors were unable to give their "guests" the slip. Woodrow spent the morning repairing the damage that had forced them to land. After one hour, Indy approached him.

"Where are you with your repairs?"

"I'm finished. This time, that cursed fuel intake pipe will no longer be a problem."

"Well done! I knew I could count on you."

"But there's a catch," continued Woodrow, his face vexed. "McDonald insists that I give him a flying lesson now."

"Well, I guess you have no real choice. Take him, but don't take your eyes off him!"

Five minutes later, McDonald was boarding the aircraft. Woodrow began by lecturing him on the basics of flying, describing the various controls and common errors to avoid. He went into so much detail that McDonald decreed that he would pilot *The Sea Hawk* himself. Pale, Woodrow tried hard

to dissuade him, but a threatening glance from Roberto told him it was useless.

Indy watched the scene from the beach. He heard the roar of the engine—which now turned without any clank—and he saw the aircraft awaken slowly and then stop. Installed in the passenger seat, Woodrow gesticulated, made great circles with both his arms. He heaved one leg over the side, as if to signify his intention to go ashore, but McDonald turned on the gas and, under the shock, Woodrow fell back in his chair. *The Sea Hawk* picked up speed and rose into the air. It described a graceful curve, then another, before beginning its descent to the beach... in a nosedive.

The sailors had barely time enough to cower in order to avoid being clipped by the furious machine passing just over them. Woodrow's cries of alarm covered the engine noise! Again, the aircraft rose into the air and started its descent, this time in an expert manner. And Captain McDonald put the seacraft on the waves with the mastery of a skilled pilot.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" McDonald roared after returning. "I gave you all quite a scare, huh, my lads?"

"It's mostly me you scared," Woodrow protested, disheveled. "I forbid you to take control of my seaplane again. Do you hear me? It's not a toy! And anyway we need to get to Miami, Indy and me. Furthermore, we intend to get going right away."

"You will do no such thing," McDonald replied with a disturbing grin. "Tonight I celebrate my birthday, and I require the honor of your presence."

"Oh no, I'm afraid it's quite impossible," insisted Woodrow with a new authority.

Indy had never seen him get on his high horse, and he was quite surprised. The episode of “recklessness” had really set him off.

“Why not?” asked the captain McDonald in a challenging tone.

“Because we’re expected in Miami,” said Woodrow. “My fiancée and Indy’s father will be worried sick if they don’t see us back today.”

“Bah! Your fiancée can wait! You know, old chap, you can’t let women lead you by the nose, heh, heh! No, take it from us, that you are the master!”

He had hardly finished his little speech about married life when he snapped his fingers at the faithful Roberto. The well-trained watchdog obeyed those fingers and those eyes. He advanced towards Woodrow in a threatening manner.

“Well, excuse me, little one, but I have a couple of unfinished errands to run. We will meet again for lunch in an hour. Roberto will escort you to your bungalow, you and your friend. And don’t forget, I’m counting on you tonight...”

Woodrow clenched his fists. He turned to Roberto:

“May I go back to my aircraft? I forgot my glasses inside?”

The bodyguard nodded without a word.



The artificial paradise

"I do not know if you have the same impression," said Indy to Woodrow after lunch, "but I feel like I'm on probation. Not exactly in prison, but not really free to move."

"That's the least one could say! I'm beginning to understand your apprehension yesterday," Woodrow said, wiping his glasses carefully. "That Roberto didn't take his eyes off me when I was working on the engine this morning. And Captain McDonald came to me asking lots of questions. Then he didn't listen to me when he wanted to make a flying obstacle course..."

"I hope you didn't tell him too much about us?"

"I did my best not to provide any specific information, that's for sure."

Indy began to spin like a caged bear in the bungalow. Once again, Roberto had escorted them there so they "could take a nap" and recover their strength. But through the small window that was the only source of light, Indy saw the captain and two of his henchmen lurking around the aircraft.

He didn't dare breathe a word to Woodrow.

"They've planned a little party tonight for McDonald's birthday," said Indy. "I presume they'll all finish up the evening drunk, including Roberto. We will have to take our chances then and go on our excursion. I think it would be wise to carry our sleeping bags in case we lose the road, along with a compass, a torch and some 'eatables,' as Herman likes to say."

"What do you think they're doing on this island?" Woodrow asked.

"I have no idea, but I intend to find out," Indy replied confidently. "And no later than tonight."

When night came, a festive atmosphere reigned on the mysterious island. The men had lit a bonfire, and the captain had put on his dress uniform.

"My friends! My friends!" he huffed and puffed, removing his pipe from his mouth. "Come join us! Tonight is my birthday, and anything goes! So enjoy!"

"It might not be necessary," Indy whispered in Woodrow's ear. "But I'd still advise you to keep your eyes open and make sure that *everyone's* having a good time, including Roberto."

"I hear you loud and clear," Woodrow confirmed.

For this holiday, a festive menu had been prepared: grilled lobster curry, the captain's favorite dish since he had tasted it in Kenya, followed by a swordfish caught the same day. Marcelo, the Chilean cook, prepared it very spicy, according to his own recipe.

"Our explorers are gourmets," Indy remarked, salivating. "This is better than what we would eaten at the Royal Palm Hotel."

Immediately, Woodrow's face darkened. What could Cornelia and the others be thinking, after the second day without news of the two adventurers?

"Well, Woody, it's no use to be anxious. That won't provide Cornelia with any comfort. What we need is to keep clear-minded, cool-headed, and to escape as soon as possible."

Deafened by the songs and shouts of the crew of the *Mary Celeste*, Indy had all the trouble in the world staying focused.

"For this, we must discover what McDonald's plans are. If you want my opinion, he has only one thing in mind..."

"...to steal my seaplane," Woodrow interrupted, his eyes burning with anger. "I understand everything!"

In his heart, Indy rejoiced. His plan was coming together beautifully. Everyone was playing their part. "Long may it continue," he mused.

McDonald and his band were showing quite a resistance to alcohol. It took no less than four hours for Roberto himself to collapse, an empty bottle in his hand.

"The ravages of alcohol are painful to see," Indy commented with a grin. "Come, now's the time we've been waiting for. Let's go, Woody!"

Armed with their lantern, the two "visitors" began a thorough search of the area. Indy suggested traveling along the seafront to discover if there were another means of access... or escape: a cove, a bay, a natural harbor... The lush vegetation made it difficult to climb, and the ground had a steep slope: in other words, this was as true an

ascent as Indy and Woodrow had engaged!

"Maybe we could pull ourselves up with a rope," quipped Woodrow, exhaling like a walrus.

Indy did not answer. He was saving his breath. The ascent lasted for a good fifteen minutes. Finally, the duo came on a sort of cliff overlooking the sea, a thousand lights twinkling in the moonlight. Indy looked around about him, then, without hesitation, stated:

"This way! Follow me, Woody."

He didn't have to say it twice. Woodrow would have followed Indy anywhere. The second part of the expedition was much more pleasant, since the terrain was steep, but this time at least it was in the right direction! After about twenty minutes, and with the help of the moonlight, they saw the top of a mast which swung gently in the night breeze.

"Look, that's a surprise!" Indy whispered. "Our friends have another boat? They said they had nothing."

"Yes, it's weird, indeed. And why choose to anchor so far from camp?"

"That's what we need to find out!"

Quietly, the two shadows of the night approached the mysterious post, which continued to nod. After walking another hundred meters, Indy stopped. At the elbow of a particularly steep trail, he had discovered not one, or even two more masts, but a forest of masts!

"My God," exclaimed Woodrow! "It looks... it looks like a... boat graveyard!"

"Exactly!" Indy confirmed. "I suspected something fishy was going on. These guys did not tell

us anything worthwhile.”

“What do we do now?” Woodrow asked, suddenly nervous.

“What do you mean, what do we do?” Indy was surprised. “We continue our descent, of course. I am sure that the cove is deserted at this hour of night. And also, I’m dying to know what secrets it contains, aren’t you?”

“Oh, sure... but... It’s just that...”

Woodrow didn’t finish the sentence, because Indy had already descended the path that led straight to the cove. And he also held the lantern! So if Woodrow wanted to avoid twisting his ankle in the dark, it was best to follow suit.

When they reached the edge of the creek, both remained motionless for many seconds, contemplating the gaping sight that met their eyes. There were dozens of beached boats in this cove. The reflections of the moon on the surface of the water gave a strange, almost supernatural, atmosphere to this unexpected scene.

“But how is it that nobody ever noticed the presence of all these boats?” Woodrow asked.

“Because this cove is hidden by vegetation,” explained Indy. “From the sea, all you see for sure are trees and bushes. You’d have to take that stream, over there, to penetrate this natural cove. In addition, I suspect that few boats come to this island... and leave intact!”

Suddenly, Woodrow jumped, as if he had been bitten by a tropical insect.

“Indy! Look! I don’t believe my eyes!”

“And yet, it’s the truth!” Indy assured him.

“That’s not what I mean,” Woodrow insisted.

“Look at the name of that three-mast, just ahead.”

Indy pointed his lantern in the direction indicated by his companion. He then discovered, written in large black letters on the bow of the wreck: SPRAY BOSTON.

“The ship of Joshua Slocum?” asked Indy.

“It’s amazing!” Woodrow exclaimed, stuck in a trance. “It’s like coming face to face with a ghost, risen from the mists of time! Yet there is no doubt. The *Spray* was registered in Boston, Massachusetts,” Woodrow elaborated. “And from Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts, it left port in November 1909, bound for South America. It did not return. All who knew him agree that Slocum was too experienced of a sailor to succumb to the perils of the ocean. After four years, the mystery has been solved.”

“At least so far,” Indy added ominously. “It’s strange, it looks to be in good condition: the jib, the mainsail and the spanker were carefully rolled... as if the ship was still in service...”

Woodrow took a few steps and began to decipher the names written in capital letters on the hulls of the other lifeless boats : the TIMBUKTU, the PRINCESSE DE CLEVES, the SKIMMER, the BLACK PIRATE...

“By God!” Woodrow said softly. “It’s said that all these boats disappeared into the Bermuda Triangle... when in reality they were captured...”

“...in the Bermuda Triangle!” Indy concluded. “That’s what I was afraid of.”

A poppy in the pond

“One could almost wonder if, over the last ten or twenty years, even one boat had disappeared from a natural cause, such as a hurricane or broken mast,” Indy remarked.

“So, McDonald and his men are actually... pirates! And they only saved us to get my seaplane?” Woodrow asked.

Indy took the lamp and peered around.

“What I don’t understand is what they do with their booty, and how they can use it on this island. No, I think we have only found the first piece of the puzzle. I’m willing to bet that this boat graveyard is the tree hiding in the forest. I propose that we resume our little excursion. But this time, we’ll start exploring inland. Anyway, even if one of the pirates woke up, he wouldn’t launch a search for us before dawn. And by then we will probably find what we seek.”

Woodrow could not but admire, even envy, Indy’s courage. Nothing frightened him. The day before, he had narrowly escaped a certain death: that’s

no problem! The next day, he departed in search of new dangers, new thrills. Had he been alone, Woodrow would have prudently spent the night in his bungalow, for fear of being attacked by a wild beast... or by some mysterious native cannibal!

The two “explorers“ plunged into the jungle. It was Indy who led the march. Behind him, Woodrow did what he could to appear calm.

“Are you sure we’re not on a wild goose chase?” asked the latter. “After all, nothing says that there has to be something inland. Maybe we’re following a false trail?”

“You can trust in my long experience,” Indy assured him. “We’ll find it. As for the trail that we’re following, it couldn’t have escaped the notice of an expert like you. We’re just trying to travel in a perfect semicircle, which will bring us back to our starting point.”

Sheepishly, Woodrow adopted a contrite silence. He had yielded to fear: so much for what he didn’t know! If Cornelia had been there, she would not have been proud of this aviator’s “genius.”

Suddenly, Indy stopped in his tracks like a pointer. He began to sniff the air, then leaned toward a patch of small bushes where he aimed the beam of his lantern.

“My word, they look like...”

He tore a leaf, twirled it between his thumb and index finger, sniffed it, and nodded.

“I thought so. It’s coca,” he said.

“Coca? Isn’t that the plant used to make cocaine?” Woodrow asked.

“Precisely,” Indy confirmed. “In fact, it’s a substance extracted from coca. It’s used in medicine.

But this substance can also be used as a drug,” said Indy. “It then causes terrible havoc on the body, and is so addictive that it’s often impossible to escape. Some people eventually die. Dying for drugs, no thank you!”

“Yeah, there are so many interesting things to do in life,” Woodrow added. “Like crossing the Channel or the Atlantic by plane, or saving your neighbor by becoming physician or surgeon... what my father would have wanted for me. What a shame to ruin your life like that!”

“That’s what I think,” said Indy. “But the presence of coca on this island is truly amazing. This is a plant that grows in South America, not the Bahamas. So how did it get here, and why?”

Woodrow’s admiration for Indy was increasing. His new friend tracked down dirty secrets around every corner, and every sentence uttered by anyone seemed suspect... He continually asked questions, doubting everything, swearing nothing. He never relied on appearances. Always, he tried to get to the bottom of things, to explore, to experiment, to understand. Yes, definitely, this Indiana Jones would make an excellent detective.

“Well, the clock is ticking, and we’ve seen enough here. I propose that we push forward. Have you enough courage to continue a little further inland, Woody? My gut tells me that we aren’t out of surprises...”

“...and you want to know for certain, is that correct?”

“Secrets cannot hide from me,” Indy replied with a smirk. “In fact, my idea is as follows. If McDonald and his band are growing coca on this

island, it's for one simple reason: to produce cocaine. However, to produce cocaine, one must have a laboratory. And this laboratory..."

"...must be carefully hidden from prying eyes, inland," Woodrow deduced in turn.

He was beginning to understand the game: he who liked to play the hero had to find ways to kill two birds with one stone. After crossing the Florida Straits for the first time, he would help dismantle a cocaine trafficking ring. If Cornelia refused to marry him after such feats, there was nothing more he could do. But he would certainly need the talents of detective Indiana Jones!

In the heart of the jungle, Indy and Woodrow could no longer count on illumination from the full moon. Their progress was slow, and the risk of falling or getting hurt increased. The first to pay the price was Woodrow, who tripped on a stump and fell flat on his face against the hard ground before tumbling over himself and landing in an embankment. Soon, Indy came to his rescue, lantern in hand.

"Anything broken?" he asked with concern.

It was unclear if he could carry Woodrow back to the camp, but there was no question of abandoning him there. After all, this island was perhaps not as deserted as it looked and who knew what dangers Woodrow might encounter in Indy's absence.

"I don't know," the airman replied, sounding quiet. "I don't think so. My fall was cushioned by this carpet of red flowers. I guess I was lucky."

"Red flowers??" Indy repeated, incredulously.

And he swept the area with his lamp beam.



“Well, well... how strange...”

He stooped and gathered some of those pretty red flowers, which looked like poppies.

“This time, there is no doubt,” he then decreed. “These lads are very well-organized drug dealers!”

“Excuse me, Indy, but I don’t see the connection with these red flowers,” Woodrow objected as he rose painfully.

“The connection is that these red flowers have the sweet name of poppy, and opium is extracted from them, the juice in their seeds. As you must certainly know, opium is a drug widely used in the Far East. In addition,” continued Indy, “poppies are used to makes heroin, a very powerful drug that appeared about ten years ago. Its euphoric effect leads those who use it to feel as if they are heroes... How ironic!”

Woodrow shook his head, defeated by the encyclopedic knowledge of his companion.

“How do you manage to know so much about so many subjects?”

“Oh, that’s nothing, I just made a presentation on drugs at school. One of Dad’s friends is a pharmacist, and he gave me a lot of information.”

And the boy began to climb the slope, whistling, with a disarming modesty.

During the rest of the night’s expedition, Woodrow resolved to follow in Indy’s step: if an obstacle barred their way, Indy the scout could protect Woodrow. Alas! They had hardly gone fifty yards when the latter tripped on a rope placed across the road and tumbled head first.

Indy had avoided the trap because he always

lifted his feet high when travelling in the dark. It was a question of prudence and... experience!

“Anything broken, Woody?”

In response, Indy had to settle for a grunt. Woodrow stood up, muttering:

“What the hell is this rope doing in my way?”

“If you want my opinion, it’s a trap. And I wouldn’t be surprised if you triggered an alarm. We’d better clear out, and fast!”

No sooner was it said than done. The two young men took refuge in what appeared to them as a clump of bushes three or four meters high. But this time, it was Indy who hit an unexpected obstacle. An obstacle that had every appearance of a wooden bulkhead.

A bulkhead? In the middle of the jungle?

Suddenly, a disastrous crack was followed by a squeal just as sinister, a sign of *even more* wicked things to come!

“Hurry! Get on your belly!” Indy ordered. “And be quiet!”

Two responsible citizens

“Didn’t you hear a noise?” said a hoarse voice, sleepily.

“Of course I do, you brutish brute!” replied another voice, as brassy as the notes of a tuba.

Both individuals undertook a brief search around and came quickly to the obvious conclusion.

“Probably a wild cat...”

“Yeah, you’re right, boss. Can we go back to bed? Because tomorrow’s going to be a long day.”

“Yeeeah... you may be right for once.”

His nose on the ground for the third time in fifteen minutes, Woodrow’s teeth were chattering in the heart of the night. He never would have thought of living such an adventure, running through such dangers, making such... sordid... discoveries!

As soon as the cabin door had closed behind the two men, Indy sprang from his hiding place like a jack-in-the-box. Woodrow tried to ignore him.

“So Woody, are you coming, or would you rather stay here all alone? I warn you, at the first break of day, these guys will get up, and if they find you

here, it's gonna get rough... Come on, don't be such a... coward! Hey, you remind me of Hermie sometimes!"

His pride wounded, and... panicked at the thought of coming face to face with those two thugs, Woodrow rose. Maybe Indy would finally be ready to head back?

"Above all, make no noise, Woody. We'll see if there are other cabins like these around. I advise you to walk in a crouched position and progress in the manner of a duck. But most of all... especially... watch where you put your feet! If we draw their attention again, I wouldn't like our chances!"

Woodrow looked up to heaven. How long would it take him endure this obstacle course? When would he see Cornelia, and the dear Winifred Postlethwaite? And good old Marmaduke, who was still serving a glass of fine, single malt Scotch whiskey?

"Look!" Indy whispered. "There is another hut about ten meters away, and then another next door. Looks like we fell into the middle of the anthill..."

"Yeah, then we must be careful of anteaters," Woodrow replied with his customary pessimism. "For we ourselves weigh no more than ants."

"In any case, we were as busy as ants last night. We can be proud of ourselves!" murmured Indy, trying to install cheer in his companion.

"So... boss," Woodrow quipped, "can we go back to bed? Because tomorrow's going to be a long day."

"Not a chance!" Indy was not listening. Like a terrier on the trail of an irresistible prey, he had gone hunting. After thirty yards, he stopped short,

his ears erect, his eyes on the lookout.

"What's going on now?" Woodrow asked, exhausted.

"Nothing, I thought I heard the sound of an engine. Probably my imagination. Here, look what I found: a warehouse. Come see what it contains."

"Are you sure this is wise?" Woodrow questioned.

"On the contrary!" Indy replied. "This is quite dangerous and not at all recommended! But we haven't come all this way to walk away when we approach the goal."

At this moment, Woodrow dreamed only of a good bed with a hot water bottle and a balm lovingly served by Cornelia!

Indy piled three empty boxes that were outside the warehouse. Then he climbed up to a small window located two meters above the ground and threw the beam of his lantern inside.

"That's what I thought," he said on the way down. "This warehouse is crammed with packets of cocaine and heroin."

"But what's the relationship with the boat graveyard?" Woodrow asked, deeply perplexed.

"Oh, there isn't one," Indy replied confidently. "McDonald and his crew board the ships that routinely get too close to the island. They fear that someone will discover their trafficking, that's all. And as the island is located in the area of the Bermuda Triangle, the authorities conclude each time that it's just a mysterious disappearance."

"But... but... but..." Woodrow stammered, "what fate did they deliver to the crew of those boats?" "

Indy stroked his chin ponderously.

"One of two things: either they join the traffickers, or... they're gotten rid of."

"But that's awful!" Woodrow whispered. "These men are monsters!"

"Welcome to the twentieth century!" Indy quipped. "And I have more bad news for you: if McDonald is interested in your aircraft, it's only because he sees it as a means to commute between the island and Miami much faster. He may therefore be able to sell more drugs into the U.S. market."

"My God!" moaned the unfortunate aviator.

Indy dealt him a frank slap on the shoulders, just to encourage him not to give up.

"Alright, now we just have to find the lab, and we'll have all the pieces of the puzzle."

"I don't know if I have the courage," Woodrow protested weakly.

"OK!" Indy replied magnanimously. "Stay here, and I'll pick you up once I've found it. This lab shouldn't be too far away, so I won't be gone for long."

And without giving Woodrow any time to voice his opinion, he rushed into the darkness, armed only with his lamp. Left on his own, the aviator huddled at the foot of a tree and fell asleep, deaf to the strange cries echoing in the canopy, blind to the many dangers around him: snakes, poisonous spiders, red ants as voracious as piranhas, and especially... monsters with human faces.

"Woody... Come on! Wake up!" Indy commanded a quarter of an hour later. "Shake a leg! I found the lab. We must return to camp before day-

break. Otherwise, our jailers will find that we've given them the slip. Come on, get up!"

On the mainland, another unsung hero was speaking about him. Consumed by worry, Henry Jones had contacted the maritime authorities, who had informed him of the reputation that the Bermuda Triangle had acquired over the centuries.

"Dozens of ships have disappeared in this area," Commander Carter explained. "And today, there are aircraft swallowed by this mysterious force."

"A mysterious force? Nonsense!" exclaimed Professor Jones. "I don't believe a word. I demand that you undertake a search for my son and Woodrow Smith. Obviously, their plane crashed into the sea and they are in mortal danger."

The professor paused to wipe a tear running down his cheek.

"... If they aren't dead already," he added gloomily.

A loud snort punctuated the the professor's emotion:

Herman stood beside him, visibly in despair.

"We want to start a search, Professor," commander Carter said, "but not until tomorrow or the day after: a storm arose in the Florida Straits, and I cannot risk the lives of my men. I'm sorry."

Henry Jones clenched his fists and raised his chin.

"Listen here, Commander Carter. I have always had a high opinion of the U.S. Coast Guard. But today I am thoroughly disillusioned. As such, I will do everything in my power to alert the highest authorities in the country of your incompetence. I am very intimate with the chief of staff to the Sec-

retary of Defense, and I give you my word that he will be informed first. Sir, I bid you good morning."

"I... I... als... also, I b... bid you... good morning," stammered Herman, who was weeping bitterly.

Henry Jones, flanked by his son's best friend, left the Coast Guard office, slamming the door.

"Because if that's how it is, I'm going to look for him myself," stormed the professor. "No one will say I let my son die without doing anything to save him."

"This... what I... think... too," added Herman, drying his tears with the back of his grimy sleeve. "And if you'll have me, I'll accompany you, Professor. No one will... say I let my b... best friend die without doing anything t... to save him!"

Henry Jones put his arm affectionately around the boy's shoulders. Maybe "Fatso" didn't have enough willpower to resist the appeal of food, but he concealed treasures of courage.

A smart Woody is forearmed

“In that case, there’s not a minute more to lose, Herman. My friend Igor Monblanc told me the name of an old salty seaman who has more experience than those coastguard sissies. And according to Igor, our sailor has incurred debts that can not repay. So I’m sure my dollars will convince him to leave port despite the coming storm.”

The rain had begun to fall, making the atmosphere of Miami Beach even more melancholy. Igor Monblanc’s horse was returned, as the professor and Herman and took a seat aboard the old man’s car. And they set off for the home of Jonas Melville, mariner of some status.

“Do I know the Bermuda Triangle?!” laughed the old sea dog. “You probably wouldn’t know it, but I traveled more than five hundred times between Bermuda and Cuba for a shipping company. And I even sailed around the world, solo!”

The wily Professor Jones had decided to ignore the exploits performed by Jonas Melville, not because he didn't trust him... but specifically as a tactic to spend as little money as possible. For even in this race, he hadn't lost his business sense. And if he had appeared as a desperate fan, the old sailor would have smelled an advantage... and prices would have soared.

"Really, around the world solo? Not possible! Do you hear this, Herman? In that case, I think we should take leave of Mr. Melville. He has far more important business to settle. We'd be better off finding someone else to accompany us. Dear Mr. Melville, can you recommend a colleague who would be interested in two hundred dollars?"

Hearing this, the other dropped his pipe.

"B... but... hum... gr... Professor...," he grumbled, his voice hoarse from smoking, "I am willing to be your guide. Quite willing, indeed. I hope for your sake that you aren't prone to seasickness, however. Because we will be rocking... Heh! Heh! In an hour or two, that storm will rage in the Straits of Florida!"

Herman, the smell of the pipe already making him sick, was now beside himself. He began to regret having volunteered to join the professor.

The storm was at its height when Jonas Melville's boat, a three-masted motorboat that had seen better days, set off to conquer the elements. The waves crested over three meters high and the wind whistled through the air. A life-jacket around his waist, Herman was clinging to the rear mast, his face contorted with nausea. He had experienced

unpleasant episodes in his short-but-full life, but none equaled this one. Indeed, unable to bring “eatables,” he had seen fit to stuff himself before departure, for fear of not being able to eat for several days if Melville’s boat was wrecked at sea

The consequences of this trivial act soon proved to be tragic...

“Hey, cabin boy, don’t you dare spit your guts on my boat, grr... Lean over the side, you will be... grr... more comfortable! Heh! Heh!”

Herman did as he was told immediately and nearly fell overboard. Professor Jones had just enough time to catch him by the legs. The latter had not eaten since the previous day, too distraught to think of eating, but that did not make him less of a threat as far as succumbing to seasickness

“I told you!” Melville rejoiced, puffing his pipe as if he were a locomotive. “This is not much... grr... much fun! But don’t worry, the *Miami Belle* is solid as a... grr... rock, and old Jonas is too. So, grr... nothing to worry about.”

Nothing to worry about... it was true, for a moment. Because the engine did not resist the mass of water that poured into the three-master!

The boat climbed the wave, then fell to a new low before crashing into another wall of water, the start a new crest. Meanwhile, Melville pulled like a devil on his mainsail, and then let go of everything before the next dive. Herman wondered if he hadn’t been thrown back several millennia to the time of the Flood described in the Bible. As for Professor Jones, he had the impression of finding himself in a giant sponge.

"In conditions like this, we'll have trouble finding a seaplane," screamed Melville over the furiously whistling wind. "But I think they would have had to cross the strait in a straight line... grrr... to take the shortest route. So, if they haven't drifted too far, we have a small chance. Otherwise, we'll have to wait until the storm subsides. In principle, we should see more clearly then."

"How long will it continue like this?" asked Professor Jones.

"Two hours? Four hours? Six? Who knows? Heh! Heh! But you can be sure: it will subside."

With this encouraging report, Henry Jones decided to endure his troubles patiently. Besides, he had nothing better to do.

The *Miami Belle* bent under the force of the storm, but it never broke. When plunged into a hollow, her mainsail would flutter, then swell again, threatening to tear.

If they could escape, Herman promised himself he would plan his return to Utah.

If only he could see his dear native Utah...

On the mysterious island, Indy and Woodrow were awakened early morning by Captain McDonald, fully recovered from his feast of the previous night. After a hearty breakfast with tropical fruit and coffee, he spread his long legs and jumped up.

"Kid, if you have no objection, I'll go for a solo trip with your cuckoo bird. I'll be back in the evening."

"Without me? Out of the quest..." Woodrow started, absolutely terrified at the prospect.

But the iron hand of Roberto had just fallen

on his right shoulder, preventing him from getting up. Woodrow looked towards his attacker.

"Would you convince me to accept by force?" he asked coolly.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! You've got a sense of humor, kid!" McDonald quipped. "This doesn't displease me! But you see, I intend to break a record, too."

"What record?" Woodrow asked, petrified.

"Well, I will fly to Miami non-stop, too, and without falling into the water! Ha! Ha Ha! Naturally, I don't want you to report me to the authorities once we're there. Best to be safe and forewarned is forearmed, as my grandfather said. Ha! Ha!"

Woodrow's eyes popped out of his head, as if they were spring loaded.

"Y... you w... want to cross the... Fl... Florida Straits *alone*?! After a *single* flying lesson?! You've gone mad!!

"Heh! Heh! That wasn't my first lesson, my boy. Do you think I would have been able to fly your vehicle if I didn't already have... some experience in aviation? I just wanted to give the seaplane a trial run, to ensure a good grip. Okay, well, I leave you and wish you a good day. Take the opportunity to take a dip in the ocean or... go fishing: I'm told that sharks are out today. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Stunned, as much by these revelations as by his own stupidity, Woodrow remained silent. How could he be so foolish as to imagine that McDonald had never flown a plane?

When he told his troubles to Cornelia, she would leave him for sure... laughing loudly!

A friendly hand landed on his shoulder. Much more friendly than that of Roberto, who was escorting his boss to *The Sea Hawk*.

"Come, Woodrow, don't despair," whispered Indy. "In life, it's better to be kind and naive than wicked and cunning. It's much easier to fool someone than to earn a show of friendship. Remember this lesson for the future, that's all. And don't worry about your seaplane: he'll bring it back in good condition. I saw him at work this morning: he's an ace with the stick."

Woodrow met Indy's myopic gaze and a smile appeared on his lips.

"I'm not as naive as I look. I admit that I fell into the trap: I was certain that McDonald had never flown. But I still took my precautions. You remember that I went back to get my glasses, after the lesson? Well, I took the opportunity to tamper with the fuel supply. And I would be very surprised if our friend arrived at his destination safely."

A ghost

“Bravo! I say bravo! Dear Woody, you never cease to surprise me,” Indy said, rapturously. “But why didn’t you tell me?” he asked.

“Hmm... because... I wasn’t sure it was such a great idea,” the hero confessed humbly.

“Anyway, it’s perfect. Now that we’ve gotten rid of McDonald, I propose that we deal with his henchmen.”

“And how are you going to do that?” Woodrow asked in a skeptical tone.

“Just watch...”

Roberto had returned and headed toward the two young men. Indy came to him, hanging his head.

“We’d like to respond to Captain McDonald’s invitation,” he announced nonchalantly. “We want to go fishing; there must be coves around the island? I’m sure they are full of delicious fish. And Woody and I love teasing the parrot fish. Right, Woody?”

The “wardrobe” knew it was a trick. But as

hard as he tried to understand, he couldn't figure out where Indy would want to go. Suddenly, a smile lit his weathered face.

"I'll go with you. There."

For him, this little word seemed to conceal a multitude of meanings. He used it at every turn. "There" punctuated every sentence, an "open sesame" that opened the doors of communication, the solution to all problems. A magic word which fit all situations... and that prevented him from seeing beyond the tip of his nose.

"If you insist... fine," said Indy, with a look of disgust. "Where can we find the necessary supplies?"

Roberto made a half-turn and pointed his finger at a shack in a pitiful state, some two hundred meters from the beach.

"There," he commented, as serious as a judge.

"That's very kind of you," Indy said with a forced smile. "We are very grateful."

Fifteen minutes later, Indy and Woodrow were both equipped with a fishing rod. Roberto let out a smirk.

"Tonight, we can cook the product of our fishing trip over the coals," Indy assured him.

Roberto now demonstrated a quiet indifference. He chose to lead the two "fishermen" in the same direction where they had discovered the boat graveyard. Indy couldn't believe his eyes!

Of course, Roberto didn't lead them that far. No, he brought them down to a small cove where it was impossible to see any mast.

"There," he announced.

He accompanied this word with a sweeping gesture of the arm, as if to signify to both "wise guys" that they should demonstrate their fishing talents to him.

"Hmm..." Indy began. "You remember, don't you, Woody, the technique of casting?"

"Uh... well... but of course!" said the aviator, staring at him with the eyes of an owl.

Indy reached into the wicker basket where he had put his supplies... and pulled out again immediately, shaking his head.

"Roberto, I'm afraid you've forgotten the bait. We need to use something as the bait. Otherwise, no fish will be in the least bit interested. This is elementary."

Yet again, Roberto's antennas began to sense unfavorable transmissions. He smelled the trap. But what could these two kids do to him? Suddenly he had an idea. He was going to dig up some worms and give it to the prisoners under his charge.

There.

The brute leaned over and began to scratch the sand with the obstinacy of a bull terrier in search of a bone. Indy was quick to exploit this unexpected opportunity. He waited until Roberto raised his head, and with a flick of the wrist and the dexterity of a rodeo king, he wrapped his line around the neck of the unfortunate behemoth... and pulled with all his might.

He didn't completely strangle him, but he brought the giant down to his knees. He was trying to insert one of his big fingers between his neck and the fishing line, without much success.

"Sorry, old Roberto. We liked you, you know,

but we have a mission to accomplish, and I don't think you do us much good."

"Quite the opposite," Woodrow saw fit to add.

Indy had taken care to discreetly wrap a rope he found in the bungalow around his waist. He also had the knife from which he never parted, allowing him to cut the rope in half and bind the wrists and ankles of Roberto. Then he untied the scarf that the unfortunate fellow wore around his neck and used it as a gag. Thus, Roberto would remain out of harm's way for quite a while.

"Really, Indy, I admire your resourcefulness!" Woodrow exclaimed, his eyes shining with admiration.

"That's very kind of you, Woody. But I don't have time to boast about my prowess. We have no time to lose. So, let's get going!"

He was careful not to mention his destination in front of Roberto.

Progression through the lush vegetation of the mysterious island proved much easier in daylight. They quickly reached the boat graveyard and continued on their way to the bungalows they'd discovered the night before.

Strangely, there was not a soul around.

"Hey, where have they all gone?" Woodrow asked.

"Probably in the fields of coca and poppies," Indy suggested. "McDonald needs to monitor the prisoners they force to harvest the leaves and flowers."

"Brrr!" Woodrow shuddered.

He imagined himself in the same situation, if





Indy's plan were to fail. A grim outlook...

Moments later, they reached the laboratory where the drug was manufactured. Indy took a quick peek inside and saw a figure hunched over test tubes.

"Not a word, Woody!" he whispered. "Somebody's in there."

Indy came down from his perch and walked to the front door, which was ajar.

"Are you sure this isn't dangerous?" asked Woodrow in a strained voice.

"On the contrary, I'm sure it's very dangerous."

"Well, in that case, I won't ask any more questions..." Woodrow conceded, looking up to heaven.

It was Indy who entered the laboratory first. A sour smell of unripe fruit floated in the air. The man who was busy with his test tubes had not heard him enter. Indy beckoned Woodrow to follow him step by step, without making a sound. The latter nodded and proceeded to walk on tip-toe. This was the moment that the chemist chose to turn around.

Upon encountering his face, Woodrow stifled a cry of surprise. Unkempt, his face gaunt and ragged, the man looked like a zombie. His eyes were lifeless, devoid of any expression, and he executed his task with mechanical gestures.

Indy decided to try confrontation: he got up and walked over to meet the man. On seeing him, he got scared and hid his head in his hands.

"I'll be done by tonight, I promise. Leave me alone. I beg you. Don't hit me. I can not think when you hit me."

Indy and Woodrow exchanged a look of bewil-

derment and compassion mixed.

"We mean you no harm, sir," Indy explained. "We too are trapped on this island against our will. Our seaplane crashed. Captain McDonald collected us but now has stolen our seaplane and refuses to let us go back to Miami. My name is Indiana Jones. And this is my friend Woodrow Smith, who has just completed the first nonstop crossing of the Florida Straits."

"Nonstop?!"

A glimmer of emotion had appeared in the eyes of the sixty-something-year-old man. As if this revelation had awakened in him some distant memory.

"I'm Joshua Slocum," he then announced in a hollow voice.

"Joshua Slocum!" Woodrow barked. "*The Joshua Slocum?* Who made the first solo trip around the world? Who disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle aboard the *Spray?*"

"That's what they thought? I had *disappeared* in the Triangle? Me, Joshua Slocum? The fools! No, I have not disappeared. I was captured by this gang of criminals who have enslaved me to their fatal designs!"

At that point, Slocum paused.

"Did you hear something?"

Indy and Woodrow shook their heads no.

"Me, I heard something. My hearing developed a lot in four years of captivity. That bumpkin Bouvier is coming, flanked by his two mustachioed henchmen. They'll beat me if I don't finish my work on time. I beg you. Go! Hurry!"

Again, his eyes became dull. The spark of hope that had appeared a few seconds earlier gave way

to a visceral fear. As Joshua Slocum returned to his test tubes, however, Indy and Woodrow hid in an office. Outside, the heavy footsteps of Bouvier and his two associates closed in on the laboratory.

The solution to the mystery?

In the middle of the Florida Straits, the storm had finally subsided, and Jonas Melville's two passengers had regained their color.

The sea now displayed a dead calm, and in the clear sky, the sun cast its rays with a zeal customary in these latitudes.

"Grr...", Jonas began by expelling a puff of smoke, "we got lucky. I believe the remainder of the trip will be quite agrrr... eable. And now, at least, the engine will help us."

"I hobe so," said Henry Jones, sneezing. "Because I'b on the verge of pneubonia..."

"Be too," added Herman, blowing his nose as he spoke. "And I'b neber been so sick in by whole life! This is torture!"

"Ah, my lads! This is our daily lot, us sailors, fishermen, surveyors of the sea. Our women spend their lives agonizing at the docks, awaiting our return!"

"I understand," the professor responded in a melancholy tone. "Me, I've waited for my son for two days, and it's not pleasant!"

The old salt drew vigorously on his pipe, nodding his head.

"Don't worry. If you ask me, their cuckoo bird landed somewhere between Miami and the Bahamas, and it must be floating like a nut shell, in the middle of the ocean."

"And by little Junior must be dying of hunger and cold," lamented Henry Jones.

"But don't be so pessimistic, for heaven's sake!" raged the mariner, engaging the *Miami Belle's* engine.

Then a strange noise caught his attention. A kind of distant hum, as if a swarm was about to engulf the boat. But it was rare for wasps to fly over the open sea, so it could only be a... plane.

And indeed, a black dot appeared in the sky, several hundred meters from the *Miami Belle*, at a very low altitude. Immediately, Henry Jones and Herman raised hopeful eyes toward the blue sky. But suddenly the hum stopped and was replaced by the equivalent of a cough, interrupted by gasps.

"Hey! Sounds like an aircraft engine misfiring," commented Jonas, who listened holding the mainsail in one hand his pipe in the other. "It might have a cold, too! heh! heh!"

He scanned the sky with eagle eyes. Soon, a toothless grin lit up his face, weathered by the spray.

"It's not a plane, my friends. It's a seaplane! A seaplane that will soon leave the sky because it's out of gas!"

“Good heavens!” cried Professor Jones. “And if it were... Oh no! Don’t let it be...”

The three sailors watched the aircraft begin its descent, shaken by hiccups, and approach the water’s surface, smooth as the skin of an apple. At first glance, the pilot appeared to have mastered his craft. But now he was coming in too fast. If he failed to slow down, the shock would shatter the cabin.

“Oh, heavens!” repeated the professor. “I don’t want to see it... No, I don’t want to see...”

“Be neither,” sounded a small trembling voice.

Fortunately, the propeller began to turn and the engine functioned long enough to allow the pilot to lift the nose of the aircraft, which was therefore able to make contact with the surface of the water at a much safer angle. Eyes half closed, Professor Jones and Herman couldn’t help watching the emergency landing of the aircraft, which sported the familiar name of *The Sea Hawk*.

“Indy and Woodrow!” they exclaimed in chorus once the aircraft hit the sea. “They are alive! God be praised!”

And both began to dance for joy with such ardor that the *Miami Belle* began to sway dangerously.

“Gently, my friends!” Jonas protested. “Otherwise, we will all take a dip.”

But Professor Jones and Herman did not rejoice for long. For neither Indy nor Woodrow appeared from the aircraft, which had stopped about fifty yards from the boat. The man who did appear from *The Sea Hawk* was a complete stranger.

“Hey! You on the boat! We can say that I’m

lucky you're here. Looks like I have a fuel problem. Would you mind very much bringing me to the Bahamas?"

"But who is this fellow?" Professor Jones rebelled. "And where are Ind..."

"Hush!" interrupted Jonas with authority. "Let me speak."

"What's that?! But still, still, I want to know..."

"Hold your tongue, I tell you!" Jonas persisted. "Trust me, I know what I'm doing!"

Without another word, he turned and sailed upwind towards the seaplane gently bobbing on the waves. The breeze was blowing a little harder and gave the boat little refuge, and then began to drag on it like velvet, producing a slight chop. In less than twenty seconds, it joined the wrecked seaplane.

"And above all, not a word, Professor!" Jonas repeated under his breath.

"Hello, my friends!" exclaimed Walter McDonald, smiling. "Yes, I certainly was lucky! I could have been stuck here a long time! My name is Woodrow Smith, aviator in distress."

"Woodrow Smith?" Professor Jones yelled, unable to conceal his amazement.

"Excuse my cousin," Jonas immediately intervened. "He is a little hard of hearing... and he believes that everyone is as deaf as he. My name is Jonas Melville. You may have heard of me?"

"Delighted," McDonald said, holding out a hand of friendship to his savior. "No, I'm sorry, but I don't think I ever heard your name."

Jonas turned to the professor, signaling him to shake the crash survivor's hand. Henry Jones

and Herman reluctantly obeyed him. Then Jonas turned again to address.... Woodrow Smith.

"Oh, do not apologize... Mr. Smith. My achievement dates back more than ten years, and I was not been the first to do it, you see; I sailed a solo trip around the world... five years after Joshua Slocum."

"Joshua Slocum? Really?" McDonald said. "How interesting... I myself have seen a lot of this wide world, and I can only admire you. I myself am a kind of adventurer. And I also have a first to my credit. I just crossed the Florida Straits nonstop aboard my seaplane. Upon arriving, I took myself to an uninhabited island in the Bahamas. And I was trying to make the return trip when damage forced me to land."

The professor began to cough and sneeze all over again, nearly choking with rage. But it was something more than anxiety that gripped him. Who was this impostor? How had he gotten control of *The Sea Hawk* and most importantly... Were Indy and the real Woodrow still alive?

"An island in the Bahamas?" Jonas repeated with interest. "It may be the one to which we are headed?"

"I doubt it," McDonald replied in a harsh tone. "*My* island does not even appear on maps. I discovered it quite by accident..."

"Ah, well, I must be mistaken," Jonas conceded.

"After all these ebotions, would you like a glass of rub?" the professor then suggested, waving a bottle in front of Jonas's surprised countenance.

"With great pleasure," said McDonald.

The professor pretended as though he was going

to pour, but suddenly broke off, crying.

“By God! Your seablane! Look!”

Immediately, McDonald turned to see what motivated these cries of outrage. The professor then grabbed the bottle by its neck and broke it over McDonald’s head. He collapsed, unconscious.

“Well done!” exclaimed Jonas. “I wouldn’t have thought to knock him out with my... *last* bottle of rum,” he quipped, “but it’s a great job.”

“The solution bresented itself,” the teacher apologized. “And now, I would give a lot to know who this imbostor is.”

“How much?” Jonas immediately asked with a twinkle in his eye.

“Oh... well... um...,” stammered the professor, trapped. “How about... five dollars?”

“Five dollars?! Ha! Ha! Ha! I think I’ll keep my secret to myself,” chuckled Jonas.

Muttering under his breath, the professor angrily wiped his glasses, before stammering:

“A hundred dollars?”

“Ah! We speak the same language now,” Jonas Melville rejoiced. “So here’s what I know: this man is called Walter McDonald. Maybe he doesn’t know me, but I know him. He’s a cocaine and heroin trafficker. One of his henchmen tried to hire me to transport his goods. I refused. I don’t touch that.”

“A drug dealer?!” Henry Jones exclaimed in horror. “But how did he get Woodrow’s seaplane? I don’t understand...”

“I understand,” said Jonas Melville, puffing on his pipe. “Indy and Woodrow succeeded in crossing the strait. They landed on an island that appeared

uninhabited. An island that does not even appear on any maps. And they must still be there. They didn't count on running into Mr. McDonald and his band..."

"And McDonald wanted to use the aircraft for... transporting his goods," the professor concluded.

"Just so," Jonas confirmed. "I wonder if..."

Henry Jones and Herman exchanged a puzzled look.

"You wonder if... what?"

"If I'm about to unravel the mystery of the Bermuda Triangle, and thereby that of the mysterious disappearance of Joshua Slocum, four years ago."

Promises, promises...

McDonald hadn't travelled far aboard *The Sea Hawk*, so it wasn't long before Jonas, the professor, and Herman arrived at an island.

"I'm not absolutely certain that this is it," warned the old Jonas, "but my gut tells me we're almost there."

"I bray to heaven that you are right," said Professor Jones, who couldn't stop sneezing and blowing his nose.

"If we find Indy alive, I'll do everything he tells me without complaining," said Herman, decidedly inclined to make promises that he would never keep.

Jonas Melville took out a telescope to make sure no one was waiting on the shore. Satisfied, he folded it and and tacked sharply to get the cross-wind.

"If someone is watching us from there, they can't see our faces," he explained, "because they will be hidden by the mainsail. Also, I prefer to dock at a safe distance from the main beach. We will have less chance of being picked up on arrival."

The old salt gave evidence of an innate knowledge of strategy.

Twenty minutes later, the *Miami Belle* landed without difficulty in a small cove hidden from view.

"Why, that's strange," Professor Jones remarked as he disembarked. "Looks like someone was fishing here. You see those two abandoned rods? And that satchel??"

"More than that, I see an abandoned man... bound hand and foot!" Jonas replied through clenched teeth. "It looks like there was trouble, here. And we can draw two conclusions: the first is that this island is not deserted, which is what we suspected, right? The second is that we are indeed on the island McDonald told us about, and we assumed that too."

"How can you be positive?" Professor Jones asked, wiping his spectacles.

As if trying to produce a theatrical effect, old Jonas Melville waited a few seconds before answering:

"Because the man in front of us is called Roberto Malaver."

"You know him?" said the professor, stunned.

"And how! He's the one who offered me a job working for his boss, Walter McDonald."

"That's impossible!" Herman cried before loudly blowing his nose.

"Well, it looks like these two fellows won't be causing much trouble," the professor remarked gladly. "That should make our job easier."

"Think again, my young friend. McDonald must have at least twenty men under his command. And they can surprise us anywhere on this island! So,

give me a hand! We need to hide McDonald and Roberto from view.”

With the help of the professor and Herman, Jonas dragged the “wardrobe“ about ten meters to a dense thicket. Then he went to get McDonald and gave him the same treatment, after tying him up as well.

“And now, my friends, we will find young Indy and Woodrow Smith.”

Well hidden under the desk of the laboratory, Woodrow and Indy didn’t utter a word when Bouvier and his two acolytes entered the great hall, which smelled like a fruity acid.

“Where are you, Slocum?” barked Bouvier, “you gelatinous mass of grease and sweat.”

“I... I’ve almost finished the next batch,” Slocum said. “Ready on time.”

“It better be, you slug! Because the boss will be back later and he intends to make another delivery tomorrow.”

“Every... everything will be ready, I assure you,” Slocum defended himself.

“That’s all I want, you miserable worm,” Bouvier spat through his teeth. “And you, what are you waiting for, you moron?” he shouted at a small weasel-faced man. “We can’t spend all day here!”

“Sorry, boss, I... I was just waiting for your orders.”

“My orders? Heh! Heh! Well, it’s time to rest, isn’t it? So, let’s deal some cards and get out the rum. For once I don’t have that stupid McDonald on my back, so I’m going to enjoy it. Ha! Ha! Ha!”

In the darkness, Indy gave Woodrow a nudge.

"Ow!" he protested.

"What are you doing, big nose?" Bouvier roared, turning on his behind.

"But n... nothing, boss, I... I said nothing."

"Weeellll, must be another one of those pesky wildcats..."

Indy gave a sigh of relief.

"Are you out of your mind, Woody? If we'd been discovered, this colossus would have turned us into mincemeat."

"I'm sorry, but don't you dare nudge me in the ribs anymore! See?"

"Well, excuse me. But you understand my surprise: these two are the same as last night. So I have a feeling that they are responsible for over-seeing all production units, so to speak. So they're the ones we must neutralize first."

Woodrow shook his head in the dark.

"Easy for you to say! But how do exactly you suggest we take them?"

"Well, I don't know... For starters, we must locate where they're going to play their game of cards. Probably in one of the barracks surrounding the laboratory. And then, we must find a way to take them out of commission.

"I'm listening!" Woodrow answered, with a hint of cynicism.

Indy came out of hiding and stretched his numb legs. Then, followed by Woodrow, he approached old Slocum, who was busy again with his test tubes.

"Mr. Slocum?" called Indy.

Going about his work, he had not even heard.

"Mr. Slocum?"

"Huh? What? Who is it? I'll finish soon, I

promise. Moreover, the product is ready for testing."

That's when, to the astonished eyes of Indy and Woodrow, Joshua Slocum inhaled a line of white powder.

"No, don't do that!" Indy cried, terrified.

The old man with dull eyes turned to the boy, trembling.

"It's good quality, you know, my boy. The best on the market!"

"But don't do it, Mr. Slocum, don't do it! Don't listen to them! These monsters exploit you!"

Slocum began to chuckle, a sinister laugh, dismal.

"You think I don't know that, little one? For four years they've kept me cooped up here. Four years!"

"We'll help you get out," Indy promised. "But for this, you must be on our side. I heard Bouvier say they were going to take advantage of McDonald's absence by playing cards and drinking rum. This is our chance! Don't you understand?"

Slocum shook his head angrily. No, he did not understand.

"Little one, I tried everything to get away from here. Every time they recapture me, the punishment is more severe than the last time. So I don't want it anymore. No, I can't stand the thought."

"Yes, but today, you won't be alone," Indy persisted, "this time, we'll be with you. With three of us, we can succeed, I assure you! All we need is to find a way to destroy these two fellows. Immobilize them for just an hour or two, time enough to escape on your boat. The sails are still in good

condition, Mr. Slocum. We examined them last night."

"I know, I know," the old man growled impatiently. "They sail it regularly. They've tried every means to make replicas of my *Spray*, to transport their miserable goods even faster, even further. But I've never told them my secret," he concluded with a remnant of pride.

He tried to gather his thoughts. He put all his energy into thinking. Yes, thinking. An activity that he hadn't practiced in months.

And suddenly his eyes lit up clearly.

"I know!" he cried. "They're drying a large net behind the laboratory. A net they use for fishing. If you can stretch it between two trees and lure them just below it..."

Deliverance

No sooner had the unfortunate Slocum uttered these words than he sank to the ground, lifeless.

“My God!” Woodrow exclaimed, terrified.

“We can’t do anything for him,” said Indy. “At least not right now. Let’s go set our trap.”

Without noise, Indy and Woodrow slipped out of the laboratory and spotted the aforementioned net, drying in the late afternoon sun.

“Slocum was right!” Indy murmured. “Well, here’s what I suggest...”

And he proceeded to explain his plan in detail to Woodrow, who would have given anything to be elsewhere in the minutes that were to follow!

Each perched in a tree, Indy and Woodrow held in their hands... a net. They had spotted the cabin where McDonald’s henchmen were playing a fierce game of cards. The difficulty of this undertaking would be to get all these men, including the terrifying Bouvier, to nicely arrange themselves *under* the net and wait quietly for it to fall on them...

To achieve this, Indy had devised a foolproof plan.

"Perfect, Woody," murmured the boy from his tree. "I absolutely can't see you in the foliage."

"Nor I you," Woodrow said. "Are you ready?"

"When you are..."

"So, here I go..."

And Woodrow then began to imitate the cry of the wild cat, not without some talent. The reaction was swift. Bouvier emerged from the cabin like a storm, cocked his gun and pointed it toward the trees. Two shots rang out: BANG! BANG!

"Meeeeooooowwwwww..." he then heard. And that groan of pain was followed by the sound of something falling.

"Oh, really! Sounds like I finally got the damn beast!" he roared, slapping his chest with vigor. "Well, that makes me thirsty! What do you think of that, moron?" he shouted to the man at the head of weasel. "Go fill my glass. And then you go pick up the corpse of that vermin, so I can admire my handiwork."

The other obeyed without flinching. After filling the glass of his lord and master, he emerged from the hut hastily and proceeded to locate the remains of the wild cat.

"Mmmmeooooowwwww!" he then heard again.

The weasel-faced man stopped short, nose in the wind. A moment later, Bouvier made another appearance, foaming at the mouth, his eyes blood-shot.

"Where is it? Where is that thing, so I can give it what it deserves?"

And he began running in all directions, anxious

to put a bullet in the creature's ear.

"Come on, you too!" he ordered. "Everybody out. The game begins again when I have the hide of that wretched excuse for a carpet!"

Ten men then emerged from the cabin, muttering.

"He's hiding in one of those two trees there. Don't shoot before you see it. It's important not to miss it this time."

The men advanced in the direction indicated. From their respective hiding places, Indy and Woodrow could see through the foliage. They counted their lucky stars that they hadn't been hit by any of the bullets that had whistled in their ears...

One after another, the men came to position themselves within reach of the net. One was still missing: the most dangerous of all, Bouvier himself, who had remained behind.

"Boss, I think I see him," said the weasel-headed man, who stared at Indy through the foliage.

"Don't move, big nose. I'm coming!" Bouvier then barked. "Don't move or I'll gut you!"

A moment later, he came and stood just below Indy and pointed at him with the barrel of his rifle.

"Now!" Indy yelled.

And the trap fell on his victims, like an eagle pouncing on its prey. Trapped, the men struggled so much that the effect was to tighten the net's grip.

"Way to go, Woody! Now for the second part of our plan!" exclaimed Indy.

The two young men came down from their perch and ran inside the cabin. Indy had anticipated that most of the men would leave their weapons behind.



"Here, catch this!" said Indy as he threw a gun at Woodrow, who caught it but then released it right away, for fear of handling such a lethal weapon.

When it hit the ground, the lethal weapon in question backfired, spinning in a circle. Indy and Woodrow had just enough time to climb onto a chair to escape the murderous bullets.

"Did you hear that?" asked Jonas Melville, a few hundred meters away. "If I'm not mistaken, it was a machine gun firing. We'll have to be extra cautious. These thugs are not kidding!"

Half-reassured, Professor Herman and Jones followed suit.

"Follow this trail here. We can't delay in identifying the place where those shots came from. But be careful. We don't want to give ourselves away."

"We bromise!" replied the chorus of Herman and Henry Jones.

After about two hundred meters, they came to a clearing lit by the rays of the sun. And they discovered a show that inspired cheers and sighs of relief.

Indy and Woodrow held a dozen men who were struggling furiously in a trap.

"Indy!!" exclaimed Herman.

"JUNIOR!!" added the professor.

Herman and Henry Jones rushed to the young hero wearing this unmistakable Stetson.

"Dad! Hermie!"

The outpouring of joy was in proportion to the anguish that preceded it, and Woodrow had his share, too.

Indy was the one who first came to his senses:

"In the lab! Slocum!" he shouted at Jonas Melville. "He's in bad shape."

The old sea dog rushed to the dilapidated building wherein Joshua Slocum had survived his terrible four-year ordeal. The famous mariner-turned-chemist was still lying on the floor, unconscious.

"Joshua! Joshua! It is you!" Jonas called, shaking with all his might.

Slocum opened one glassy eye, then another. His pupils were dilated to the extreme.

"Joshua, I thought you were dead!" Melville exclaimed with tears in his eyes. "But when this rogue McDonald told me about his island, I don't know why, I had an intuition that perhaps... you were stranded there and they were making you work for them. But, my God! Don't tell me..."

Slocum shook his head painfully, in despair. He sat up with difficulty, and his old friend Jonas Melville, whom he had met many years earlier, helped him into a chair.

"And I'm afraid. It's the truth," Slocum sighed, exhausted. "During my many travels, including... South America and... in India, I gained... valuable knowledge for those... bandits."

He spoke in a barely audible voice:

"When they captured me, they... they offered me a deal: I either... explained to them how to grow coca and opium here, in the Bahamas, or they were going to kill me. So... I was forced to manufacture their drugs, and to consume it... to test its effectiveness. They eventually made me dependent."

Tears began to stream down his face, soaking

his paper-mache skin.

"Look what I've become! But I always kept hoping to get away and report them. Today... I'm a slave to the poison... I'm good for nothing."

"Come, Joshua," Jonas Melville scolded, "don't give up! We'll get you out of here, and right away. My boat is waiting for us, and McDonald and his men are out of commission."

Without waiting a minute longer, he led Slocum to the exit of the laboratory, to freedom. But a nasty surprise was waiting for him outside. Because when he opened the door, he realized that the situation had changed.

Indy, Woodrow, the professor and Herman were now at the wrong end of weapons held by Bouvier and his henchmen, who had found a way to break free of their bonds with some unexpected assistance... McDonald and Roberto.

"They surprised us from behind," Indy apologized, somewhat embarrassed. "We couldn't do anything."

McDonald turned to Jonas Melville with a scary grin.

"Well, well, we meet again! Small world, isn't it? In fact, I wanted to thank you for taking me back on my island. Unfortunately, I no longer need you! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Wings and fins

Clearly, McDonald was enjoying himself.

“As I announced earlier this morning to your friends Indiana Jones and Woodrow Smith, the sharks are out today. So how about going to say hello? Above all, don’t worry about your seaplane, Mr. Smith: we’ll retrieve it and paint it so that it becomes unrecognizable. You see, I thought of every detail. Everyone will think that... you and your companion Indiana Jones disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle... Ha! Ha! Ha!”

Herman was shaking like a coca leaf in a storm. Professor Jones trembled with rage. Only Indy was preparing to face his doom with resignation.

“I have recited my last prayers twice. But, as the saying goes: these things always come in threes,” he mused. But he did not despair of finding a way to escape death...

McDonald took his prisoners aboard the *Mary Celeste* and it was Roberto who grabbed the wheel. The trafficker’s other henchmen held their victims

tightly. Indy racked his brain in vain, and found himself at an impasse. And headed straight for an insurmountable wall.

"You will not go to heaven," protested Professor Jones.

"I mock your heaven, dear professor," McDonald replied. "For me, heaven is on earth. I couldn't care less what happens to me after my death. All I care about is that I'm alive now. Unfortunately for you, you won't be able to say that much longer. Mathias, give those friendly sharks a taste, if you will..."

One of the sailors seized a bucket full of chum and dumped it into the sea.

"Nothing like the smell of blood to attract these little ones," assured the captain of the *Mary Celeste*. "And now, my friends, it's your turn. Who wants to be the first to jump?"

"N... no... no... no..." stammered Herman, livid. "I want to g... go back to U... Utah..."

"But of course you will go back to Utah," McDonald quipped. "In another life..."

"You are a monster!" accused Professor Jones, brandishing a clenched fist. "But you aren't immune to human justice. You'll pay for your crimes... you'll pay! Do you hear me?"

Indifferent to these ridiculous threats, McDonald motioned to his men to get rid of these impostors once and for all.

"Gentlemen, I wish you a safe journey. I hope to never see you again!"

And the six victims were rushed into the waves one after another. Already, the shark fins were on the horizon...

"I al... always a... ate too m... much and n... now, I g... uess it's m... me who... will be eaten!" Herman mumbled, his face distorted by fear.

"Shut up and swim!" Indy ordered. "We aren't eaten yet. If anything, these sharks are not man-eaters..."

They would soon be set straight on this issue. Indeed, the fins—seven in number—had joined and encircled them.

"It would take a miracle for us to get out of this," Woodrow noted with resignation. "So, my friends, if one of you survives, I charge you with telling my dear Cornelia how much I loved her."

"Really, you are a bunch of damned pessimists," grumbled Jonas Melville. "If you opened your eyes and ears, instead of bemoaning your fate, you would see and you would hear the Coast Guard's flagship coming to our rescue. And also you would see that we aren't surrounded by sharks, but by... dolphins! And personally, I've never met a man-eating dolphin..."

"D... d... dol... dolphins...?" repeated Herman, with great difficulty.

"Yes, young man, dolphins! They believe that we are hurt and they're coming to our rescue."

Suddenly, the first sympathetic head emerged from the water and greeted these strange creatures lost in the middle of the ocean.

"But how is it that the Coast Guard could have spotted us so quickly?" asked Indy.

"Well, when your father has reported your disappearance," explained Jonas Melville, "they told him they would begin their search after the storm. As I knew they were likely to locate the aircraft

abandoned at sea by McDonald, I left them a note on one of the seats, indicating the probable latitude and longitude of the island that he had described."

"My seaplane? So my little trick worked!" Woodrow rejoiced. "Good things come in twos, isn't that right? Who said I was a pessimist?"

Minutes later, the Coast Guard's flagship came to rest near the six swimmers in distress. After taking them aboard, Commander Carter set out in pursuit of the *Mary Celeste*.

"Nice work, gentlemen," praised Henry Jones with a grin. This earned him a glower from the commander, who had not forgotten the professor's disparaging remarks from earlier.

"Hmm... I will not fail to report to Washington how you have shown to be effective in this case..., commander. Hmm... no, I will not fail to do that. That's the least we can do... hmm..."

The Coast Guard, assisted by a second flagship, easily managed to stop the *Mary Celeste*. Its occupants surrendered without resistance.

"We still have to burn the fields of coca and poppies," the commander said, shrugging his shoulders. We have long suspected that McDonald was engaged in a trade like this, but we didn't have any evidence against him. Now it's different. The only thing I regret is that we couldn't intervene earlier to snatch Mr. Slocum from his claws. I hope he will recover his health after a detox."

"He can count on me for moral support," asserted Jonas Melville. "I'll watch him closely!"

And he vainly tried to light his pipe, still full of seawater.

Epilogue

“It’s them! It’s them!” Cornelia Postlethwaite yelped, viewing the flagship through the telescope from the coast guard station! “They are safe! This is a miiiiiracle!”

“I do not believe it!” added Norma Bellini, the Italian nightingale. Our suuuffering is coming to an end!”

A pack of journalists gathered at the foot of the station. The feat achieved by Woodrow Smith and the capture of McDonald and his band were going to make headlines the next morning.

When the heroes disembarked, they had to scramble to avoid suffocation.

“Gentlemen! I beg you! Let us pass!” Commander Carter ordered. “We have a patient with us.”

“Slocum!” cried one of the journalists! “It’s old Joshua Slocum, previously thought disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle!”

The excitement was at its height, and it took several minutes for Indy and Woodrow to work their way back to Norma and Cornelia. The latter had a pleasant surprise in store for her hero.

“Oh, my daaaaarling! I loooooove you! Yes, you’re

the man I aaaalways waaaanted! This time, I have decided to maaaarry you!"

But Woodrow barely had time to savor this long-awaited good news, because a man with gray-ing hair approached him and purposefully handed him a sheet of paper.

"Mr. Woodrow Smith, I'm George Wilfred Barrow. I represent the developers of the first regular airline that will link St. Petersburg and Tampa, Florida, and it is an honor and a privilege for me to be able to offer you a job as one of our pilots. Here is your contract. You just have to sign it."

Unable to bear this flood of emotions, Woodrow Smith nearly fainted... from happiness. For their part, Indy and Norma never took their eyes off each other. And even Professor Jones had nothing to complain about.

Then a familiar little voice shouted:

"When do we eat?"